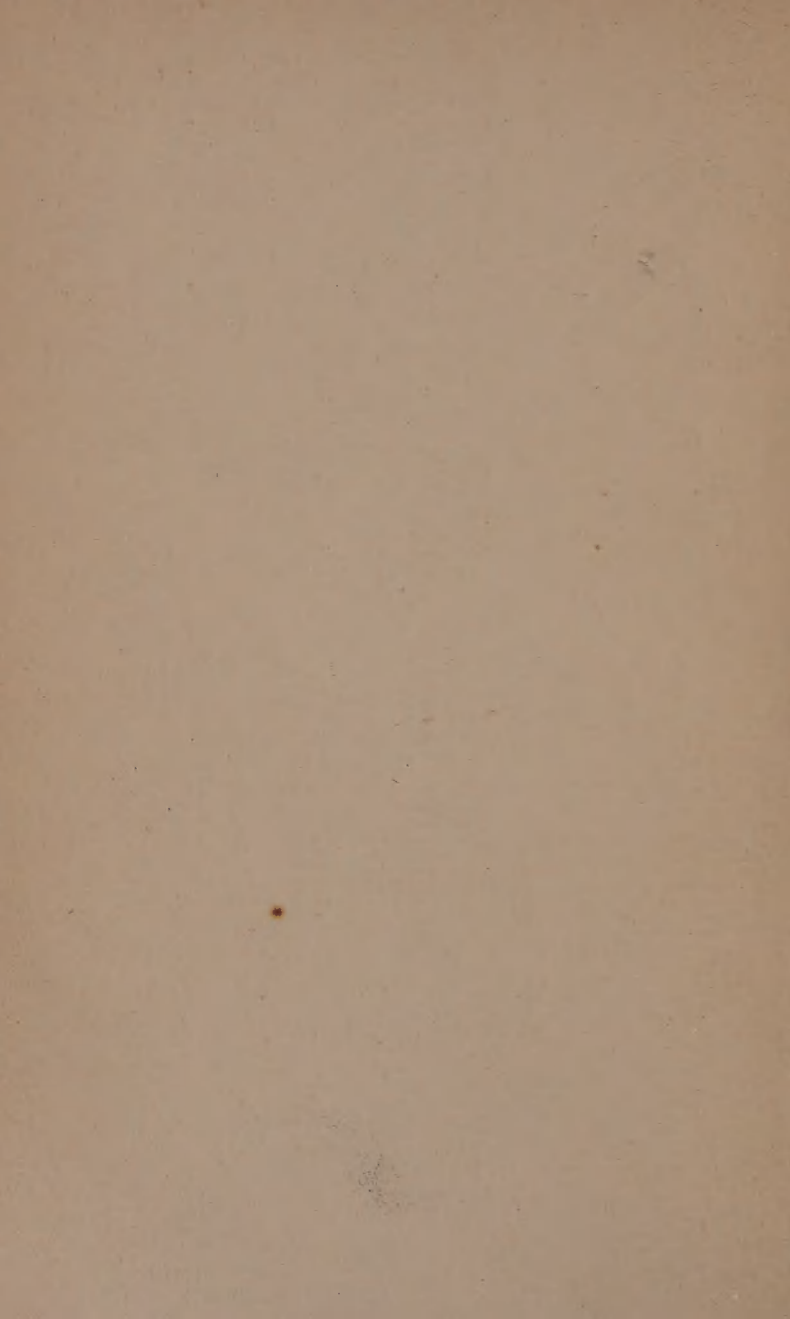


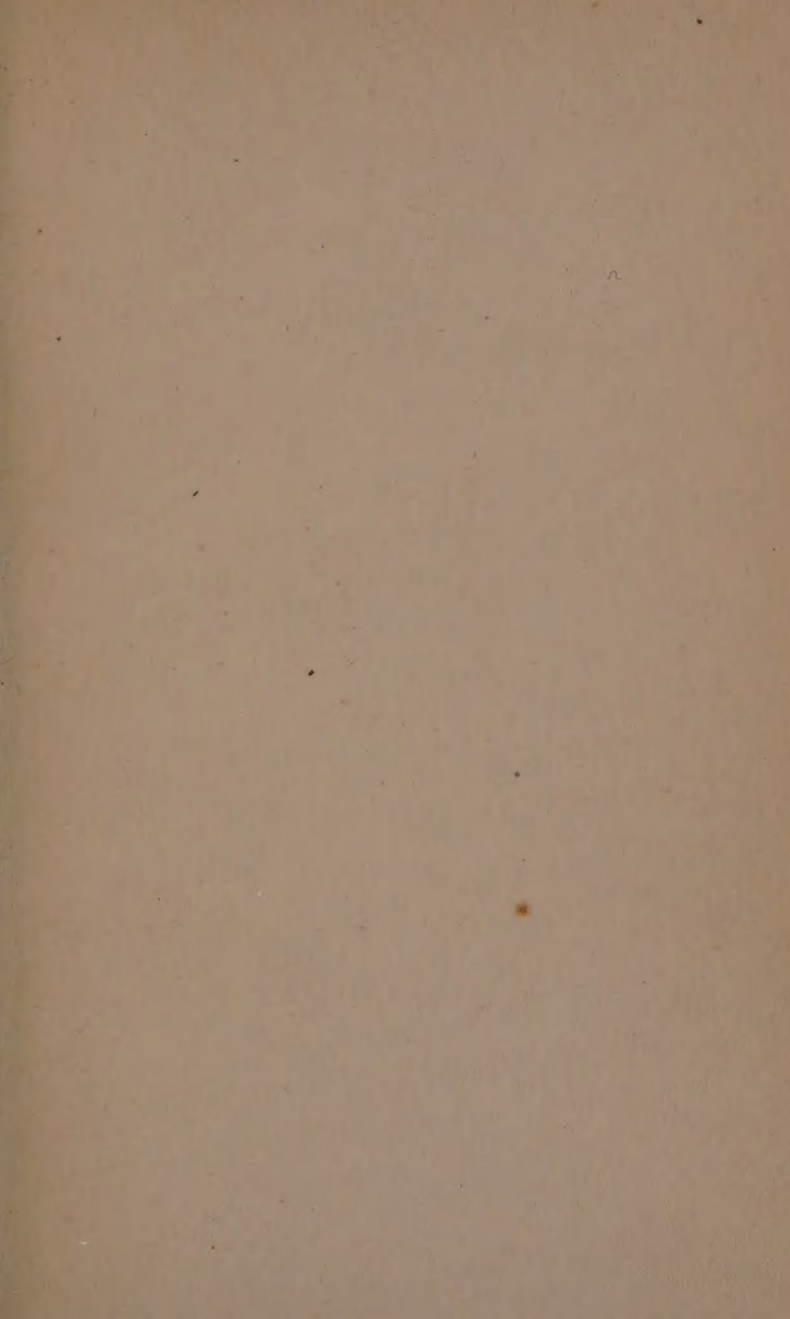




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438.







The Land of the Counterpane.

THE POEMS
OF
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

WILLIAM P. TRENT

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
A CHILD'S GARDEN OF VERSES	I
I. Bed in Summer	3
II. A Thought	4
III. At the Sea-side	5
IV. Young Night Thought	6
V. Whole Duty of Children	7
VI. Rain	8
VII. Pirate Story	9
VIII. Foreign Lands	11
IX. Windy Nights	13
X. Travel	14
XI. Singing	17
XII. Looking Forward	18
XIII. A Good Play	19
XIV. Where go the Boats	20
XV. Auntie's Skirts	21
XVI. The Land of Counterpane	22
XVII. The Land of Nod	23
XVIII. My Shadow	24
XIX. System	26
XX. A Good Boy	27
XXI. Escape at Bedtime	29
XXII. Marching Song	31
XXIII. The Cow	32

	PAGE
XXIV. Happy Thought	33
XXV. The Wind	34
XXVI. Keepsake Mill	35
XXVII. Good and Bad Children	37
XXVIII. Foreign Children	39
XXIX. The Sun's Travels	41
XXX. The Lamplighter	42
XXXI. My Bed is a Boat	44
XXXII. The Moon	45
XXXIII. The Swing	46
XXXIV. Time to Rise	47
XXXV. Looking-glass River	48
XXXVI. Fairy Bread	50
XXXVII. From a Railway Carriage	51
XXXVIII. Winter-Time	52
XXXIX. The Hayloft	54
XL. Farewell to the Farm	55
XLI. North-west Passage	56
THE CHILD ALONE	59
I. The Unseen Playmate	61
II. My Ship and I	63
III. My Kingdom	65
IV. Picture-Books in Winter	67
V. My Treasures	69
VI. Block City	71
VII. The Land of Story-Books	73
VIII. Armies in the Fire	75
IX. The Little Land	77
GARDEN DAYS	81
I. Night and Day	83
II. Nest Eggs	86

CONTENTS.

V

PAGE

III. The Flowers 88

IV. Summer Sun 89

V. The Dumb Soldier 91

VI. Autumn Fires 93

VII. The Gardener 94

VIII. Historical Associations 96

ENVOYS 97

I. To Willie and Henrietta 99

II. To my Mother 100

III. To Auntie 101

IV. To Minnie 102

V. To my Name-Child 106

VI. To Any Reader 109

THE SONG OF RAHÉRO 111

THE FEAST OF FAMINE 171

TICONDEROGA 211

HEATHER ALE 229

CHRISTMAS AT SEA 237

UNDERWOODS 245

Book I.—In English 255

I. Envoy 255

II. A Song of the Road 256

III. The Canoe speaks 258

IV. It is the Season now to Go 260

V. The House Beautiful 262

VI. A Visit from the Sea 264

	PAGE
VII. To a Gardener	266
VIII. To Minnie	268
IX. To K. de M.	269
X. To N. V. de G. S.	271
XI. To Will. H. Low	273
XII. To Mrs. Will. H. Low	275
XIII. To H. F. Brown	277
XIV. To Andrew Lang	279
XV. Et tu in Arcadia Vixisti	281
XVI. To W. E. Henley	286
XVII. Henry James	288
XVIII. The Mirror speaks	289
XIX. Katharine	291
XX. To F. J. S.	292
XXI. Requiem	293
XXII. The Celestial Surgeon	294
XXIII. Our Lady of the Snows	295
XXIV. Not yet, my Soul	299
XXV. It is not yours, O Mother	302
XXVI. The Sick Child	305
XXVII. In Memoriam F. A. S.	307
XXVIII. To my Father	309
XXIX. In the States	311
XXX. A Portrait	312
XXXI. Sing Clearlier, Muse	314
XXXII. A Camp	315
XXXIII. The Country of the Camisards	316
XXXIV. Skerryvore	317
XXXV. Skerryvore; the Parallel	318
XXXVI. My House, I say	319
XXXVII. My Body, which my Dungeon is	320
XXXVIII. Say not of me that Weakly I Declined	322

CONTENTS.

vii

	PAGE
Book II. — In Scots	323
I. The Maker to Posterity	324
II. Ille Terrarum	327
III. When Aince Aprile has fairly come	331
IV. A Mile an' a Bittock	333
V. A Lowden Sabbath Morn	335
VI. The Spaewife	343
VII. The Blast — 1875	345
VIII. The Counterblast — 1886	347
IX. The Counterblast Ironical	351
X. Their Laureate to an Academy Class Dinner Club	353
XI. Embro Hie Kirk	357
XII. The Scotsman's Return from Abroad	361
XIII. Late in the Night	366
XIV. My Conscience!	370
XV. To Doctor John Brown	372
XVI. It's an Owercome Sooth for Age an' Youth	376

INTRODUCTION.

IT is quite plain from passages in his recently published correspondence that, while Stevenson took not a little interest in his verses and had a poet's proper ambitions, he did not conceive himself to be an adept in the poetic art. In this regard his rare critical faculty did not betray him. He was *par excellence* a writer of prose romances, and, unlike many other famous authors, had few illusions about his work in the higher category. He did not, like his great predecessor, Scott, begin with poetry and descend to prose; but he was just as willing to disclaim all serious aspirations for the laurel crown as Scott was to resign to Byron the "hallowed bays" which the latter had twitted him with unworthily receiving from "Milton, Dryden, Pope alike forgot."

Yet the world has not been willing to remember Scott in one rôle only, and it is quite likely that it will pursue the same course with regard to Stevenson. Perhaps it may even go so far as to forget the younger writer's fiction, save that "Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," the central conception of which is too powerful to be easily forgotten, and to remember him rather as the author of "A Child's Garden of Verses" and of sundry excellent poems, letters, and

essays, than as the versatile romancer who charmed his own generation. Verse, as we all know, if it be above mediocrity, has a better chance of life than prose; its finer qualities, especially that of compression, make for it a place in our memories, or at least in our anthologies.

Now Stevenson's verse, whether or not he was what we know as a "born poet," was in some important respects distinctly above mediocrity. Those of his contemporaries, therefore, who admired and loved it have little need to be ashamed of the favor they showed it; while those who stood aloof from him in his various rôles would do well to reëxamine this segment of his multifarious work before they calmly assign him to oblivion as a clever, attractive man who filled a larger space in the world's regard than his actual merits justified. To the ardent Stevensonian, of course, a hint that partial oblivion may overtake his favorite — that weaver of romances whose own life was a romance of devoted heroism, that generous, sympathetic critic, that truest of friends, that exquisitely poetical soul — will seem to be quite ridiculous; but time has often made wrecks of greater reputations than Stevenson's, and his discreet friends need not be sorry that they have in the present volume a collection of verses which future anthologists are quite sure to rifle. Perhaps, however, it will be as well if we let Stevenson's fame take care of itself and turn our attention to his poetry.

Setting aside his occasional poems, some of which, as we read them in the two volumes of delightful let-

ters Mr. Colvin has just given us, seem to prove conclusively that if Stevenson had only tried he could have easily rivalled Thackeray or Calverley as a writer of humorous *vers de société*, our author's poetry divides itself naturally, as he saw, into three parts, represented by the volumes entitled "A Child's Garden of Verses" (1885), "Underwoods" (1887), and "Ballads" (1890). When after his death his unpublished and scattered verses were collected, they quite inevitably made a third book of "Underwoods" with the title of "Songs of Travel and Other Verses" (1896). In other words, Stevenson wrote poems for the young, short pieces upon occasional subjects much as Ben Jonson, from whom he borrowed the title "Underwoods," had done before him, and narrative poems in ballad form upon South Sea and Highland legends. The body of verse thus brought together was large enough to serve as a basis for a very high, though probably not the highest, poetic fame; in range, the matter of quality being waived, it was sufficiently comprehensive to place the poet above the crowded class of the merely minor writers of verse. Although he died young, he had nevertheless passed the age when many poets begin to flag in originality. It follows, therefore, that Stevenson's poetry should not be treated as a mere aside in a busy life—there is evidence enough in the "Letters" that he devoted serious thought to it—that he had as fair a chance to win high poetic fame as many another poet who has made his name a household word, and that in the determination of his rank as a poet the main question

relates to the quality of his work. What, then, is the quality of each of the three divisions ?

With regard to "A Child's Garden of Verses," which was begun in the summer of 1881 at Braemar during one of the few visits the already chronic invalid dared to make to his beloved Highlands, and was practically finished at Hyères in the spring of 1883, after he had as it were found his vocation in "Treasure Island," few competent readers have ever had the least doubt that it is a masterpiece of its kind. Stevenson, in his humorous way, called it for a long time "Penny Whistles"; but the characteristic letter in which he told his old nurse, Alison Cunningham, that he intended to dedicate it to her proves, if proof be needed, that he must have felt that he was doing a piece of work altogether admirable. His childhood had been checkered with illness, but it had been that rare thing in these modern days, a real childhood. Indeed, he never throughout his life ceased to be a child, as an acute French critic, M. de Wyzewa has recently remarked apropos of the correspondence. Hence, when he laid out his "Garden," he actually took walks in it, he swung in its trees, peeped over its wall. He made a wonderfully successful book because he based it on real experience, just as Daudet had done a few years before in the first part of "Le Petit Chose," that delightful picture of French boyhood. He put himself into it, and as he was still half a child, and as all children, whether British or French or Samoan, delighted him and he them, he was sure to please every juvenile reader, while, being his whimsi-

cal, clever, lovable self, he was sure to please adult readers just as much or more. It was this realistic element of his work that made the poem beginning, —

“ We built a ship upon the stairs
All made of the back-bedroom chairs,
And filled it full of sofa pillows
To go a-sailing on the billows,”

a *chef-d'œuvre* of poetry for the young, as many a mother can testify. It was this same element that gave the irresistible touch, so far as adults are concerned, to these four lines : —

“ When I am grown to man's estate
I shall be very proud and great,
And tell the other girls and boys
Not to meddle with my toys.”

Such touches are absent from Blake's “ Songs of Innocence,” and hence these divine poems, which of course represent poetic heights to which Stevenson did not attain, have never been really popular with either old or young. It may seem odd to speak of realism in connection with the romantic Stevenson; but when we set his work beside that of an idealist like Blake, we see that realism is the only term we can properly use, and that it goes far toward explaining the success the “ Garden ” has had and is likely to continue to have.

It is, perhaps, odder still, however, to go on prosing about such exquisite, fragile works of art — or nature if you will — as these delightful poems. What has the heavy-handed critic to do with them? Nothing,

surely, save to wish that he could be a child once more in order really to enjoy them. As a child he would not notice the few infelicities which as a discreet man he refrains from specifying. He would simply class Stevenson as a benefactor along with "Lewis Carroll" and Edward Lear and our own Whitcomb Riley, and would not concern himself with questions of relative originality and merit, or with the fact that the "Garden" is after all but a mere fragrant parterre in the wide domain of the greater writer's works.

Passing to "Underwoods," however, we find more for the critic to do; yet, when we can secure so competent a critic as Stevenson, and when we find that he is remarkably disinterested with regard to his own work, why should we go farther?

In May, 1883, Stevenson was evidently trying his hand on verses for older readers. He wrote to Mr. W. E. Henley: "I am now a great writer of verses. . . . I have the mania now like my betters, and faith, if I live till I am forty, I shall have a book of rhymes like Pollock, Gosse, or whom you please. Really, I have begun to learn the rudiments of that trade, and have written three or four pretty enough pieces of octosyllabic nonsense, semi-serious, semi-smiling; a kind of prose Herrick divested of the gift of verse, and you behold the Bard. But I like it."

This is eminently sane—an understatement, to be sure, but based on clear perceptions. Stevenson was a kinsman of Herrick, but he did not have the latter's gift of singing. Indeed, who has had it among the moderns?

Four years later, when he was getting in sight of forty, the occasional verses had grown into the volume he anticipated. In September, 1887, he wrote to Mr. Sidney Colvin: "The success of 'Underwoods' is gratifying. You see the verses are sane; that is their strong point, and it seems it is strong enough to carry them." Again his criticism was singularly acute and just. The verses were sane, and furnished a most wholesome and pleasant contrast to the triolets and rondeaux and other delicate though rather decadent poems with which the readers of the day had been satiated. They did not play upon the chords of racial pride and prejudice, or open up a new region for the imagination to wander in, as the verses of Mr. Kipling were soon to do; but they pleased Stevenson's friends and won him others. On December 6, of the same year, he was able to write as follows to his friend John Addington Symonds: "I wonder if you saw my book of verses? It went into a second edition, because of my name, I suppose, and its *prose* merits. I do not set up to be a poet; only an all-round literary man: a man who talks, not one who sings. But I believe the very fact that it was only speech served the book with the public. Horace is much a speaker, and see how popular! . . . Excuse this little apology for my house; but I don't like to come before people who have a note of song, and let it be supposed I do not know the difference."

Further quotations are needless, save one from a letter to Mr. Colvin written December 14, 1886, in which, after announcing that he has been taking his

“bardly exercises” in Scotch, he adds, “with what success, I know not, but I think it’s better than my English verse: more marrow and fatness, and more ruggedness.”

It is as easy to disagree with this last particular judgment as it is to agree with Stevenson’s general estimate of his performance in verse. The sixteen Scotch poems are assuredly not bad, but too many of them suggest that the writer knew his Burns and his Fergusson, for the latter of whom he had a most generous affection, a little over well. His own authentic voice seems to come out most clearly and strongly when, as in the last poem of the collection, he abandons the stanza they have preëmpted, and sings simply and truly as in these lines: —

“ There are kind hearts still, for friends to fill
And fools to take and break them;
But the nearest friends are the auldest friends
And the grave ’s the place to seek them.”

One Scotch word alone flavors this stanza, but do we want any more? It must not be supposed, however, that he does not write well in more or less pure Scotch. The letter from Mr. Thomson to Mr. Johnstone, with its praise — not in Burns’s stanza — of Scotch whiskey and Scotch preaching, is excellent. There are first-rate lines and stanzas too, such as

“ The tack o’ mankind, near the dregs,
Rins unco law ”;

and

“ Love, wi’ her auld recruitin’ drum
Than taks the gate ”;

and

" Ane went hame wi' the ither, an' then
The ither went hame wi' the ither twa men,
An' baith wad return him the service again,
An' the mune was shinin' clearly."

Yet even here do we not seem to catch a note of Burns? And are not the letters written in Scotch, especially that of November 13, 1884, to Charles Baxter, in some ways more remarkable than the verses — and at least unsuggestive of "exercises" — "bardly" or other?

As for the English poems, whether of 1887 or of 1896, although not great, they are often very delightful and occasionally linger in the memory. They lack poetical elaboration, their author being either obliged or tempted to work his octosyllabics and other simple measures almost to the point of exhaustion; yet after all much of the charm that undoubtedly attends the verses comes from their unelaboration which in turn comes from Stevenson's sincerity and sanity. What matters it if octosyllabics do tend to become slipshod when they are used by a man who can give us lines like these?

" Yet shall your ragged moor receive
The incomparable pomp of eve,
And the cold glories of the dawn
Behind your shivering trees be drawn."

What matter again if the "envoy" be plain Herrick, if Catullus did write his "*Phaselus ille*" nearly two thousand years before Stevenson thought of letting

his own canoe make a pretty speech that was never finished? What matter if such lines as

“ Service still craving service, love for love,
Love for dear love, still suppliant with tears,”

are pure Tennyson, when it is abundantly clear that our poet, who would “one natural verse recapture,” had his wish granted over and over? The author of “The House Beautiful,” “To a Gardener,” “Et Tu in Arcadia Vixisti,” “Requiem,” “Our Lady of the Snows,” “In Memoriam—F. A. S.,” “Sing clearer, Muse”—and these titles by no means exhaust the list of good or excellent poems—has a full right to say, with Alfred de Musset, that his glass may be a small one, but that it is his own.

Nor is Stevenson at his best only in such unelaborate appealing stanzas as

“ This be the verse you grave for me :
Here he lies where he longed to be ;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.”

He is capable of blank verse that satisfies the most fastidious ear and of imaginative passages that greater poets would not have disdained. Take for example these fine lines from “Et Tu in Arcadia Vixisti.”

“ As when the Indian to Dakota comes
Or farthest Idaho, and where he dwelt,
He with his clan, a humming city finds ;
Thereon a while, amazed, he stares, and then
To right and leftward, like a questing dog,
Seeks first the ancestral altars, then the hearth

Long cold with rains, and where old terror lodged,
And where the dead. So thee undying Hope,
With all her pack, hunts screaming through the years :
Here, there, thou fleeëst ; but nor here nor there
The pleasant gods abide, the glory dwells."

Perhaps the cultured reader may connect this passage in a vague way with the Homeric simile as utilized by Matthew Arnold, he may even think of the movement of some of Bryant's stately verses, but if he is wise he will merely re-read the lines and enjoy them. If they effect nothing else, they will at least prove an antidote to some of Stevenson's lapses, as for example when he thus apostrophizes Mr. Henley,—

"O thou, Orpheus and Heracles, the bard
And the deliverer, touch the stops again ! "

or when he discovers in our own distinguished countryman in exile, Mr. Henry James, "the Prince of Men."

With regard to the five poems grouped as "Ballads," the less said the better. It is evident from many passages in his letters that Stevenson was much interested in them during their composition, that he thought that they at least had narrative merits, and that he hoped the public would enjoy them. It is equally evident, however, that, as in much of his seriously planned prose devoted to the South Seas, he failed of his purpose. The public remained cold. Even so devoted an admirer as Mr. Colvin does not pretend to like the "Ballads." At least one reader who in the main enjoys Stevenson would rather re-read "The Island," that far from great performance of

Byron, who never saw the Pacific, than these verses of Stevenson, who knew the South Seas as probably no other English writer has ever done. Perhaps some readers will care for them simply because they deal with out-of-the-way subjects; but others will find their main profit in reflecting that we have in them a striking additional proof of the fact that great conscientiousness, knowledge, and industrious devotion on the part of a poet will not suffice to turn his verses into poetry.

It does not seem fair, however, to take leave of so admirable a writer as Stevenson with such negations and reservations. If his note is not often that of the born singer, it is never less than that of a brave, true man whose abundant culture and his feeble health did not deaden his love for his fellows or his capacity for making life a pleasure and a service. His poetry does not represent him fully; no phase of his multifarious work does that, and perhaps his fame will ultimately suffer through the fact; but at least his verses are not factitious, they are a definite if small addition to our literature, and they give a crowning grace to the fascinating life-work of a singularly noble character.

W. P. TRENT.

FEBRUARY 28, 1900.

A CHILD'S GARDEN OF
VERSES.

I.

BED IN SUMMER.

IN winter I get up at night
And dress by yellow candle-light.
In summer, quite the other way,
I have to go to bed by day.

I have to go to bed and see
The birds still hopping on the tree,
Or hear the grown-up people's feet
Still going past me in the street.

And does it not seem hard to you,
When all the sky is clear and blue,
And I should like so much to play,
To have to go to bed by day?

II.

A THOUGHT.

It is very nice to think
The world is full of meat and drink,
With little children saying grace
In every Christian kind of place.

III.

AT THE SEA-SIDE.

WHEN I was down beside the sea
A wooden spade they gave to me
To dig the sandy shore.

My holes were empty like a cup.
In every hole the sea came up,
Till it could come no more.

IV.

YOUNG NIGHT THOUGHT.

ALL night long and every night,
When my mama puts out the light,
I see the people marching by,
As plain as day, before my eye.

Armies and emperors and kings,
All carrying different kinds of things,
And marching in so grand a way,
You never saw the like by day.

So fine a show was never seen
At the great circus on the green;
For every kind of beast and man
Is marching in that caravan..

At first they move a little slow,
But still the faster on they go,
And still beside them close I keep
Until we reach the town of Sleep.

V.

WHOLE DUTY OF CHILDREN.

A CHILD should always say what's true
And speak when he is spoken to,
And behave mannerly at table;
At least as far as he is able.

VI.

RAIN.

THE rain is raining all around,
It falls on field and tree,
It rains on the umbrellas here,
And on the ships at sea.

VII.

PIRATE STORY.

THREE of us afloat in the meadow by the
swing,

Three of us aboard in the basket on the lea.
Winds are in the air, they are blowing in the
spring,

And waves are on the meadow like the waves
there are at sea.

Where shall we adventure, to-day that we're
afloat,

Wary of the weather and steering by a star?
Shall it be to Africa, a-steering of the boat,
To Providence, or Babylon, or off to Malabar?

Hi! but here's a squadron a-rowing on the
sea —

Cattle on the meadow a-charging with a
roar!

Quick, and we'll escape them, they're as mad
as they can be,

The wicket is the harbour and the garden is
the shore.

VIII.

FOREIGN LANDS.

UP into the cherry tree
Who should climb but little me?
I held the trunk with both my hands
And looked abroad on foreign lands.

I saw the next door garden lie,
Adorned with flowers, before my eye,
And many pleasant places more
That I had never seen before.

I saw the dimpling river pass
And be the sky's blue looking-glass;
The dusty roads go up and down
With people tramping in to town.

If I could find a higher tree
Farther and farther I should see,
To where the grown-up river slips
Into the sea among the ships,

To where the roads on either hand
Lead onward into fairy land,
Where all the children dine at five,
And all the playthings come alive.

IX.

WINDY NIGHTS.

WHENEVER the moon and stars are set,
Whenever the wind is high,
All night long in the dark and wet,
A man goes riding by.
Late in the night when the fires are out,
Why does he gallop and gallop about?

Whenever the trees are crying aloud,
And ships are tossed at sea,
By, on the highway, low and loud,
By at the gallop goes he.
By at the gallop he goes, and then
By he comes back at the gallop again.

X.

TRAVEL.

I SHOULD like to rise and go
Where the golden apples grow; —
Where below another sky
Parrot islands anchored lie,
And, watched by cockatoos and goats,
Lonely Crusoes building boats; —
Where in sunshine reaching out
Eastern cities, miles about,
Are with mosque and minaret
Among sandy gardens set,
And the rich goods from near and far
Hang for sale in the bazaar; —
Where the Great Wall round China goes,
And on one side the desert blows,
And with bell and voice and drum,
Cities on the other hum; —
Where are forests, hot as fire,
Wide as England, tall as a spire,

Full of apes and cocoa-nuts
And the negro hunters' huts; —
Where the knotty crocodile
Lies and blinks in the Nile,
And the red flamingo flies
Hunting fish before his eyes; —
Where in jungles, near and far,
Man-devouring tigers are,
Lying close and giving ear
Lest the hunt be drawing near,
Or a comer-by be seen
Swinging in a palanquin; —
Where among the desert sands
Some deserted city stands,
All its children, sweep and prince,
Grown to manhood ages since,
Not a foot in street or house,
Not a stir of child or mouse,
And when kindly falls the night,
In all the town no spark of light.
There I'll come when I'm a man
With a camel caravan;
Light a fire in the gloom
Of some dusty dining room;

See the pictures on the walls,
Heroes, fights and festivals;
And in a corner find the toys
Of the old Egyptian boys.

XI.

SINGING.

OF speckled eggs the birdie sings
And nests among the trees;
The sailor sings of ropes and things
In ships upon the seas.

The children sing in far Japan,
The children sing in Spain;
The organ with the organ man
Is singing in the rain.

XII.

LOOKING FORWARD.

WHEN I am grown to man's estate
I shall be very proud and great,
And tell the other girls and boys
Not to meddle with my toys.

XIII.

A GOOD PLAY.

WE built a ship upon the stairs
All made of the back-bedroom chairs,
And filled it full of sofa pillows
To go a-sailing on the billows.

We took a saw and several nails,
And water in the nursery pails;
And Tom said, "Let us also take
An apple and a slice of cake;" —
Which was enough for Tom and me
To go a-sailing on, till tea.

We sailed along for days and days,
And had the very best of plays;
But Tom fell out and hurt his knee,
So there was no one left but me.

XIV.

WHERE GO THE BOATS?

DARK brown is the river,
 Golden is the sand.
It flows along for ever,
 With trees on either hand.

Green leaves a-floating,
 Castles of the foam,
Boats of mine a-boating —
 Where will all come home?

On goes the river
 And out past the mill,
Away down the valley,
 Away down the hill.

Away down the river,
 A hundred miles or more,
Other little children
 Shall bring my boats ashore.

XV.

AUNTIE'S SKIRTS.

WHENEVER Auntie moves around,
Her dresses make a curious sound;
They trail behind her up the floor,
And trundle after through the door.

XVI.

THE LAND OF COUNTERPANE.

WHEN I was sick and lay a-bed,
I had two pillows at my head,
And all my toys beside me lay
To keep me happy all the day.

And sometimes for an hour or so
I watched my leaden soldiers go,
With different uniforms and drills,
Among the bed-clothes, through the hills;

And sometimes sent my ships in fleets
All up and down among the sheets;
Or brought my trees and houses out,
And planted cities all about.

I was the giant great and still
That sits upon the pillow-hill,
And sees before him, dale and plain,
The pleasant land of counterpane.

XVII.

THE LAND OF NOD.

FROM breakfast on through all the day
At home among my friends I stay;
But every night I go abroad
Afar into the land of Nod.

All by myself I have to go,
With none to tell me what to do —
All alone beside the streams
And up the mountain-sides of dreams.

The strangest things are there for me,
Both things to eat and things to see,
And many frightening sights abroad
Till morning in the land of Nod.

Try as I like to find the way,
I never can get back by day,
Nor can remember plain and clear
The curious music that I hear.

XVIII.

MY SHADOW.

I HAVE a little shadow that goes in and out with
me,

And what can be the use of him is more than
I can see.

He is very, very like me from the heels up to
the head;

And I see him jump before me, when I jump
into my bed.

The funniest thing about him is the way he
likes to grow —

Not at all like proper children, which is always
very slow;

For he sometimes shoots up taller like an india-
rubber ball,

And he sometimes gets so little that there's
none of him at all.

He has n't got a notion of how children ought
to play,

And can only make a fool of me in every sort
of way.

He stays so close beside me, he's a coward
you can see; -

I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that
shadow sticks to me!

One morning, very early, before the sun was
up,

I rose and found the shining dew on every
buttercup;

But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant
sleepy-head,

Had stayed at home behind me and was fast
asleep in bed.

XIX.

SYSTEM.

EVERY night my prayers I say,
And get my dinner every day;
And every day that I've been good,
I get an orange after food.

The child that is not clean and neat,
With lots of toys and things to eat,
He is a naughty child, I'm sure —
Or else his dear papa is poor.

XX.

A GOOD BOY.

I WOKE before the morning, I was happy all
the day,
I never said an ugly word, but smiled and
stuck to play.

And now at last the sun is going down behind
the wood,
And I am very happy, for I know that I've
been good.

My bed is waiting cool and fresh, with linen
smooth and fair,
And I must off to sleeps-in-by, and not forget
my prayer.

I know that, till to-morrow I shall see the sun
arise,
No ugly dream shall fright my mind, no ugly
sight my eyes.

But slumber hold me tightly till I waken in
the dawn,

And hear the thrushes singing in the lilacs
round the lawn.

XXI.

ESCAPE AT BEDTIME.

THE lights from the parlour and kitchen shone
out

Through the blinds and the windows and
bars;

And high overhead and all moving about,

There were thousands of millions of stars.

There ne'er were such thousands of leaves on
a tree,

Nor of people in church or the Park,

As the crowds of the stars that looked down
upon me,

And that glittered and winked in the dark.

The Dog, and the Plough, and the Hunter, and
all,

And the star of the sailor, and Mars,

These shone in the sky, and the pail by the
wall

Would be half full of water and stars.

They saw me at last, and they chased me with
cries,

And they soon had me packed into bed;
But the glory kept shining and bright in my
eyes,

And the stars going round in my head.

XXII.

MARCHING SONG.

BRING the comb and play upon it!

Marching, here we come!

Willie cocks his highland bonnet,

Johnnie beats the drum.

Mary Jane commands the party,

Peter leads the rear;

Feet in time, alert and hearty,

Each a Grenadier!

All in the most martial manner

Marching double-quick;

While the napkin like a banner

Waves upon the stick!

Here's enough of fame and pillage,

Great commander Jane!

Now that we've been round the village,

Let's go home again.

XXIII.

THE COW.

THE friendly cow all red and white,
I love with all my heart:
She gives me cream with all her might,
To eat with apple-tart.

She wanders lowing here and there,
And yet she cannot stray,
All in the pleasant open air,
The pleasant light of day;

And blown by all the winds that pass
And wet with all the showers,
She walks among the meadow grass
And eats the meadow flowers.

XXIV.

HAPPY THOUGHT.

THE world is so full of a number of things,
I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings.

XXV.

THE WIND.

I SAW you toss the kites on high
And blow the birds about the sky;
And all around I heard you pass,
Like ladies' skirts across the grass —
 O wind, a-blowing all day long,
 O wind, that sings so loud a song!

I saw the different things you did,
But always you yourself you hid.
I felt you push, I heard you call,
I could not see yourself at all —
 O wind, a-blowing all day long,
 O wind, that sings so loud a song!

O you that are so strong and cold,
O blower, are you young or old?
Are you a beast of field and tree,
Or just a stronger child than me?
 O wind, a-blowing all day long,
 O wind, that sings so loud a song!

XXVI.

KEEPSAKE MILL.

OVER the borders, a sin without pardon,
Breaking the branches and crawling below,
Out through the breach in the wall of the
garden,
Down by the banks of the river, we go.

Here is the mill with the humming of thunder,
Here is the weir with the wonder of foam,
Here is the sluice with the race running
under —
Marvellous places, though handy to home!

Sounds of the village grow stiller and stiller,
Stiller the note of the birds on the hill;
Dusty and dim are the eyes of the miller,
Deaf are his ears with the moil of the mill.

Years may go by, and the wheel in the river
Wheel as it wheels for us, children, to-day,

Wheel and keep roaring and foaming for ever
Long after all of the boys are away.

Home from the Indies and home from the
ocean,

Heroes and soldiers we all shall come home;
Still we shall find the old mill wheel in
motion,

Turning and churning that river to foam.

You with the bean that I gave when we quar-
relled,

I with your marble of Saturday last,
Honoured and old and all gaily apparelled,
Here we shall meet and remember the past.

XXVII.

GOOD AND BAD CHILDREN.

CHILDREN, you are very little,
And your bones are very brittle;
If you would grow great and stately,
You must try to walk sedately.

You must still be bright and quiet,
And content with simple diet;
And remain, through all bewild'ring,
Innocent and honest children.

Happy hearts and happy faces,
Happy play in grassy places —
That was how, in ancient ages,
Children grew to kings and sages.

But the unkind and the unruly,
And the sort who eat unduly,

They must never hope for glory —
Theirs is quite a different story!

Cruel children, crying babies,
All grow up as geese and gabies,
Hated, as their age increases,
By their nephews and their nieces.

XXVIII.

FOREIGN CHILDREN.

• LITTLE Indian, Sioux or Crow,
Little frosty Eskimo,
Little Turk or Japanee,
O! don't you wish that you were me?

You have seen the scarlet trees
And the lions over seas;
You have eaten ostrich eggs,
And turned the turtles off their legs.

Such a life is very fine,
But it's not so nice as mine:
You must often, as you trod,
Have wearied *not* to be abroad.

You have curious things to eat,
I am fed on proper meat;

You must dwell beyond the foam,
But I am safe and live at home.

Little Indian, Sioux or Crow,

Little frosty Eskimo,

Little Turk or Japanee,

O! don't you wish that you were me?

XXIX.

THE SUN'S TRAVELS.

THE sun is not a-bed, when I
At night upon my pillow lie;
Still round the earth his way he takes,
And morning after morning makes.

While here at home, in shining day,
We round the sunny garden play,
Each little Indian sleepy-head
Is being kissed and put to bed.

And when at eve I rise from tea,
Day dawns beyond the Atlantic Sea;
And all the children in the West
Are getting up and being dressed.

XXX.

THE LAMPLIGHTER.

My tea is nearly ready and the sun has left
the sky;

It's time to take the window to see Leerie
going by;

For every night at teatime and before you take
your seat,

With lantern and with ladder he comes posting
up the street.

Now Tom would be a driver and Maria go to
sea,

And my papa's a banker and as rich as he
can be;

But I, when I am stronger and can choose
what I'm to do,

O Leerie, I'll go round at night and light the
lamps with you!

For we are very lucky, with a lamp before the
door,

And Leerie stops to light it as he lights so
many more;

And O! before you hurry by with ladder and
with light,

O Leerie, see a little child and nod to him
to-night!

XXXI.

MY BED IS A BOAT.

My bed is like a little boat;
Nurse helps me in when I embark;
She girds me in my sailor's coat
And starts me in the dark.

At night, I go on board and say
Good night to all my friends on shore;
I shut my eyes and sail away
And see and hear no more.

And sometimes things to bed I take,
As prudent sailors have to do;
Perhaps a slice of wedding-cake,
Perhaps a toy or two.

All night across the dark we steer;
But when the day returns at last
Safe in my room, beside the pier,
I find my vessel fast.

XXXII.

THE MOON.

THE moon has a face like the clock in the hall;
She shines on thieves on the garden wall,
On streets and fields and harbour quays,
And birdies asleep in the forks of the trees.

The squalling cat and the squeaking mouse,
The howling dog by the door of the house,
The bat that lies in bed at noon,
All love to be out by the light of the moon.

But all of the things that belong to the day
Cuddle to sleep to be out of her way;
And flowers and children close their eyes
Till up in the morning the sun shall arise.

THE SWING.

How do you like to go up in a swing,
Up in the air so blue?
Oh, I do think it the pleasantest thing
Ever a child can do!

Up in the air and over the wall,
Till I can see so wide,
Rivers and trees and cattle and all
Over the countryside —

Till I look down on the garden green,
Down on the roof so brown —
Up in the air I go flying again,
Up in the air and down!

XXXIV.

TIME TO RISE.

A BIRDIE with a yellow bill
Hopped upon the window sill,
Cocked his shining eye and said:
“Ain’t you ’shamed, you sleepy-head!”

XXXV.

LOOKING-GLASS RIVER.

SMOOTH it slides upon its travel,
Here a wimple, there a gleam—
O the clean gravel!
O the smooth stream!

Sailing blossoms, silver fishes,
Paven pools as clear as air—
How a child wishes
To live down there!

We can see our coloured faces
Floating on the shaken pool
Down in cool places,
Dim and very cool;

Till a wind or water wrinkle,
Dipping martin, plumping trout,

Spreads in a twinkle
And blots all out.

See the rings pursue each other;
All below grows black as night,
Just as if mother
Had blown out the light!

Patience, children, just a minute —
See the spreading circles die;
The stream and all in it
Will clear by-and-by.

XXXVI.

FAIRY BREAD.

COME up here, O dusty feet!
Here is fairy bread to eat.
Here in my retiring room,
Children, you may dine
On the golden smell of broom
And the shade of pine;
And when you have eaten well,
Fairy stories hear and tell.

XXXVII.

FROM A RAILWAY CARRIAGE.

FASTER than fairies, faster than witches,
Bridges and houses, hedges and ditches;
And charging along like troops in a battle,
All through the meadows the horses and cattle:
All of the sights of the hill and the plain
Fly as thick as driving rain;
And ever again, in the wink of an eye,
Painted stations whistle by.

Here is a child who clambers and scrambles,
All by himself and gathering brambles;
Here is a tramp who stands and gazes;
And there is the green for stringing the daisies!
Here is a cart run away in the road
Lumping along with man and load;
And here is a mill and there is a river:
Each a glimpse and gone for ever!

XXXVIII.

WINTER-TIME.

LATE lies the wintry sun a-bed,
A frosty, fiery sleepy-head;
Blinks but an hour or two; and then,
A blood-red orange, sets again.

Before the stars have left the skies,
At morning in the dark I rise;
And shivering in my nakedness,
By the cold candle, bathe and dress.

Close by the jolly fire I sit
To warm my frozen bones a bit;
Or, with a reindeer-sled, explore
The colder countries round the door.

When to go out, my nurse doth wrap
Me in my comforter and cap;

The cold wind burns my face, and blows
Its frosty pepper up my nose.

Black are my steps on silver sod;
Thick blows my frosty breath abroad;
And tree and house, and hill and lake,
Are frosted like a wedding-cake.

XXXIX.

THE HAYLOFT.

THROUGH all the pleasant meadow-side
The grass grew shoulder-high,
Till the shining scythes went far and wide
And cut it down to dry.

These green and sweetly smelling crops
They led in waggons home;
And they piled them here in mountain tops
For mountaineers to roam.

Here is Mount Clear, Mount Rusty-Nail,
Mount Eagle and Mount High;—
The mice that in these mountains dwell,
No happier are than I!

O what a joy to clamber there,
O what a place for play,
With the sweet, the dim, the dusty air,
The happy hills of hay!

XL.

FAREWELL TO THE FARM.

THE coach is at the door at last;
The eager children, mounting fast
And kissing hands, in chorus sing:
Good-bye, good-bye, to everything!

To house and garden, field and lawn,
The meadow-gates we swang upon,
To pump and stable, tree and swing,
Good-bye, good-bye, to everything!

And fare you well for evermore,
O ladder at the hayloft door,
O hayloft where the cobwebs cling,
Good-bye, good-bye, to everything!

Crack goes the whip, and off we go;
The trees and houses smaller grow;
Last, round the woody turn we swing:
Good-bye, good-bye, to everything!

XLI.

NORTH-WEST PASSAGE.

I. GOOD NIGHT.

WHEN the bright lamp is carried in,
The sunless hours again begin;
O'er all without, in field and lane,
The haunted night returns again.

Now we behold the embers flee
About the firelit hearth; and see
Our faces painted as we pass,
Like pictures, on the window-glass.

Must we to bed indeed? Well then,
Let us arise and go like men,
And face with an undaunted tread
The long black passage up to bed.

Farewell, O brother, sister, sire!
O pleasant party round the fire!
The songs you sing, the tales you tell,
Till far to-morrow, fare ye well!

2. SHADOW MARCH.

All round the house is the jet-black night;
It stares through the window-pane;
It crawls in the corners, hiding from the light,
And it moves with the moving flame.

Now my little heart goes a-beating like a drum,
With the breath of the Bogie in my hair;
And all round the candle the crooked shadows
come,
And go marching along up the stair.

The shadow of the balusters, the shadow of the
lamp,
The shadow of the child that goes to bed —
All the wicked shadows coming, tramp, tramp,
tramp,
With the black night overhead.

3. IN PORT.

Last, to the chamber where I lie
My fearful footsteps patter nigh,
And come from out the cold and gloom
Into my warm and cheerful room.

There, safe arrived, we turn about
To keep the coming shadows out,
And close the happy door at last
On all the perils that we past.

Then, when mamma goes by to bed,
She shall come in with tip-toe tread,
And see me lying warm and fast
And in the Land of Nod at last.

THE CHILD ALONE.

I.

THE UNSEEN PLAYMATE.

WHEN children are playing alone on the green,
In comes the playmate that never was seen.
When children are happy and lonely and good,
The Friend of the Children comes out of the
wood.

Nobody heard him and nobody saw,
His is a picture you never could draw,
But he's sure to be present, abroad or at
home,
When children are happy and playing alone.

He lies in the laurels, he runs on the grass,
He sings when you tinkle the musical glass;
Whene'er you are happy and cannot tell why,
The Friend of the Children is sure to be by!

He loves to be little, he hates to be big,
'Tis he that inhabits the caves that you dig;
'Tis he when you play with your soldiers of tin
That sides with the Frenchmen and never can
win.

'Tis he, when at night you go off to your bed,
Bids you go to your sleep and not trouble your
head;
For wherever they're lying, in cupboard or
shelf,
'Tis he will take care of your playthings him-
self!

II.

MY SHIP AND I.

O it's I that am the captain of a tidy little
ship,

Of a ship that goes a-sailing on the pond;
And my ship it keeps a-turning all around and
all about;

But when I'm a little older, I shall find the
secret out

How to send my vessel sailing on beyond.

For I mean to grow as little as the dolly at
the helm,

And the dolly I intend to come alive;
And with him beside to help me, it's a-sailing
I shall go,

It's a-sailing on the water, when the jolly
breezes blow

And the vessel goes a divie-divie-dive.

O it's then you'll see me sailing through the
rushes and the reeds,

And you'll hear the water singing at the
prow;

For beside the dolly sailor, I'm to voyage and
explore,

To land upon the island where no dolly was
before,

And to fire the penny cannon in the bow

III.

MY KINGDOM.

DOWN by a shining water well
I found a very little dell,
 No higher than my head.
The heather and the gorse about
In summer bloom were coming out,
 Some yellow and some red.

I called the little pool a sea;
The little hills were big to me;
 For I am very small.
I made a boat, I made a town,
I searched the caverns up and down,
 And named them one and all.

And all about was mine, I said,
The little sparrows overhead,
 The little minnows too.

This was the world and I was king;
For me the bees came by to sing,
For me the swallows flew.

I played there were no deeper seas,
Nor any wider plains than these,
Nor other kings than me.
At last I heard my mother call
Out from the house at evenfall,
To call me home to tea.

And I must rise and leave my dell,
And leave my dimpled water well,
And leave my heather blooms.
Alas! and as my home I neared,
How very big my nurse appeared,
How great and cool the rooms!

IV.

PICTURE-BOOKS IN WINTER.

SUMMER fading, winter comes —
Frosty mornings, tingling thumbs,
Window robins, winter rooks,
And the picture story-books.

Water now is turned to stone
Nurse and I can walk upon;
Still we find the flowing brooks
In the picture story-books.

All the pretty things put by,
Wait upon the children's eye,
Sheep and shepherds, trees and crooks,
In the picture story-books.

We may see how all things are
Seas and cities, near and far,

And the flying fairies' looks,
In the picture story-books.

How am I to sing your praise,
Happy chimney-corner days,
Sitting safe in nursery nooks,
Reading picture story-books?

V.

MY TREASURES.

THESE nuts, that I keep in the back of the
nest

Where all my lead soldiers are lying at rest,
Were gathered in autumn by nursie and me
In a wood with a well by the side of the sea.

This whistle we made (and how clearly it
sounds!)

By the side of a field at the end of the
grounds.

Of a branch of a plane, with a knife of my
own,

It was nursie who made it, and nursie alone!

The stone, with the white and the yellow and
grey,

We discovered I cannot tell *how* far away;

And I carried it back although weary and cold,
For though father denies it, I 'm sure it is gold.

But of all my treasures the last is the king,
For there's very few children possess such a
thing;

And that is a chisel, both handle and blade,
Which a man who was really a carpenter made.

VI.

BLOCK CITY.

WHAT are you able to build with your blocks?
Castles and palaces, temples and docks.
Rain may keep raining, and others go roam,
But I can be happy and building at home.

Let the sofa be mountains, the carpet be sea,
There I'll establish a city for me:
A kirk and a mill and a palace beside,
And a harbour as well where my vessels may
ride.

Great is the palace with pillar and wall,
A sort of a tower on the top of it all,
And steps coming down in an orderly way
To where my toy vessels lie safe in the bay.

This one is sailing and that one is moored:
Hark to the song of the sailors on board!

And see on the steps of my palace, the kings
Coming and going with presents and things!

Now I have done with it, down let it go!
All in a moment the town is laid low.
Block upon block lying scattered and free,
What is there left of my town by the sea?

Yet, as I saw it, I see it again,
The kirk and the palace, the ships and the
men,
And as long as I live and where'er I may be,
I'll always remember my town by the sea.

VII.

THE LAND OF STORY-BOOKS.

AT evening when the lamp is lit,
Around the fire my parents sit;
They sit at home and talk and sing,
And do not play at anything.

Now, with my little gun, I crawl
All in the dark along the wall,
And follow round the forest track
Away behind the sofa back.

There, in the night, where none can spy,
All in my hunter's camp I lie,
And play at books that I have read
Till it is time to go to bed.

These are the hills, these are the woods,
These are my starry solitudes;

And there the river by whose brink
The roaring lions come to drink.

I see the others far away
As if in firelit camp they lay,
And I, like to an Indian scout,
Around their party prowled about.

So, when my nurse comes in for me,
Home I return across the sea,
And go to bed with backward looks
At my dear land of Story-books.

VIII.

ARMIES IN THE FIRE.

THE lamps now glitter down the street;
Faintly sound the falling feet;
And the blue even slowly falls
About the garden trees and walls.

Now in the falling of the gloom
The red fire paints the empty room:
And warmly on the roof it looks,
And flickers on the backs of books.

Armies march by tower and spire
Of cities blazing, in the fire;—
Till as I gaze with staring eyes,
The armies fade, the lustre dies.

Then once again the glow returns;
Again the phantom city burns;

And down the red-hot valley, lo!
The phantom armies marching go!

Blinking embers, tell me true
Where are those armies marching to,
And what the burning city is
That crumbles in your furnaces!

IX.

THE LITTLE LAND.

WHEN at home alone I sit
And am very tired of it,
I have just to shut my eyes
To go sailing through the skies—
To go sailing far away
To the pleasant Land of Play;
To the fairy land afar
Where the Little People are;
Where the clover-tops are trees,
And the rain-pools are the seas,
And the leaves like little ships
Sail about on tiny trips;
And above the daisy tree
 Through the grasses,
High o'erhead the Bumble Bee
 Hums and passes.

In that forest to and fro
I can wander, I can go;

See the spider and the fly,
And the ants go marching by
Carrying parcels with their feet
Down the green and grassy street.
I can in the sorrel sit
Where the ladybird alit.
I can climb the jointed grass,
 And on high
See the greater swallows pass
 In the sky,
And the round sun rolling by
Heeding no such things as I.

Through that forest I can pass
Till, as in a looking-glass,
Humming fly and daisy tree
And my tiny self I see,
Painted very clear and neat
On the rain-pool at my feet.
Should a leaflet come to land,
Drifting near to where I stand,
Straight I'll board that tiny boat
Round the rain-pool sea to float.

Little thoughtful creatures sit
On the grassy coasts of it;
Little things with lovely eyes
See me sailing with surprise.
Some are clad in armour green —
(These have sure to battle been!) —
Some are pied with ev'ry hue,
Black and crimson, gold and blue;
Some have wings and swift are gone; —
But they all look kindly on.

When my eyes I once again
Open, and see all things plain:
High bare walls, great bare floor;
Great big knobs on drawer and door;
Great big people perched on chairs,
Stitching tucks and mending tears,
Each a hill that I could climb,
And talking nonsense all the time —
 O dear me,
 That I could be
A sailor on the rain-pool sea,
A climber in the clover-tree,
And just come back, a sleepy-head,
Late at night to go to bed.

GARDEN DAYS.

I.

NIGHT AND DAY.

WHEN the golden day is done,
Through the closing portal,
Child and garden, flower and sun,
Vanish all things mortal.

As the blinding shadows fall
As the rays diminish,
Under evening's cloak, they all
Roll away and vanish.

Garden darkened, daisy shut,
Child in bed, they slumber—
Glow-worm in the highway rut,
Mice among the lumber.

In the darkness houses shine,
Parents move with candles;

Till on all, the night divine
Turns the bedroom handles.

Till at last the day begins
In the east a-breaking,
In the hedges and the whins
Sleeping birds a-waking.

In the darkness shapes of things,
Houses, trees, and hedges,
Clearer grow; and sparrow's wings
Beat on window ledges.

These shall wake the yawning maid;
She the door shall open —
Finding dew on garden glade
And the morning broken.

There my garden grows again
Green and rosy painted,
As at eve behind the pane
From my eyes it fainted.

Just as it was shut away,
Toy-like, in the even,

Here I see it glow with day
Under glowing heaven.

Every path and every plot,
Every bush of roses,
Every blue forget-me-not
Where the dew reposes,

“Up!” they cry, “the day is come
On the smiling valleys:
We have beat the morning drum;
Playmate, join your allies!”

II.

NEST EGGS.

BIRDS all the sunny day
Flutter and quarrel
Here in the arbour-like
Tent of the laurel.

Here in the fork
The brown nest is seated;
Four little blue eggs
The mother keeps heated.

While we stand watching her, -
Staring like gabies,
Safe in each egg are the
Bird's little babies.

Soon the frail eggs they shall
Chip, and upspringing

Make all the April woods
Merry with singing.

Younger than we are,
O children, and frailer,
Soon in blue air they'll be,
Singer and sailor.

We, so much older,
Taller and stronger,
We shall look down on the
Birdies no longer.

They shall go flying
With musical speeches
High overhead in the
Tops of the beeches.

In spite of our wisdom
And sensible talking,
We on our feet must go
Plodding and walking.

III.

THE FLOWERS.

ALL the names I know from nurse:
Gardener's garters, Shepherd's purse,
Bachelor's buttons, Lady's smock,
And the Lady Hollyhock.

Fairy places, fairy things,
Fairy woods where the wild bee wings,
Tiny trees for tiny dames—
These must all be fairy names!

Tiny woods below whose boughs
Shady fairies weave a house;
Tiny tree-tops, rose or thyme,
Where the braver fairies climb!

Fair are grown-up people's trees,
But the fairest woods are these;
Where, if I were not so tall,
I should live for good and all.

IV.

SUMMER SUN.

GREAT is the sun, and wide he goes
Through empty heaven without repose;
And in the blue and glowing days
More thick than rain he showers his rays.

Though closer still the blinds we pull
To keep the shady parlour cool,
Yet he will find a chink or two
To slip his golden fingers through.

The dusty attic, spider-clad,
He, through the keyhole, maketh glad;
And through the broken edge of tiles,
Into the laddered hayloft smiles.

Meantime his golden face around
He bares to all the garden ground,

And sheds a warm and glittering look
Among the ivy's inmost nook.

Above the hills, along the blue,
Round the bright air, with footing true,
To please the child, to paint the rose,
The gardener of the World, he goes.

V.

THE DUMB SOLDIER.

WHEN the grass was closely mown,
Walking on the lawn alone,
In the turf a hole I found
And hid a soldier underground.

Spring and daisies came apace;
Grasses hide my hiding place;
Grasses run like a green sea
O'er the lawn up to my knee.

Under grass alone he lies,
Looking up with leaden eyes,
Scarlet coat and pointed gun,
To the stars and to the sun.

When the grass is ripe like grain,
When the scythe is stoned again,
When the lawn is shaven clear,
Then my hole shall reappear.

I shall find him, never fear,
I shall find my grenadier;
But for all that's gone and come,
I shall find my soldier dumb

He has lived, a little thing
In the grassy woods of spring;
Done, if he could tell me true,
Just as I should like to do.

He has seen the starry hours
And the springing of the flowers
And the fairy things that pass
In the forests of the grass.

In the silence he has heard
Talking bee and ladybird,
And the butterfly has flown
O'er him as he lay alone.

Not a word will he disclose,
Not a word of all he knows.
I must lay him on the shelf,
And make up the tale myself.

VI.

AUTUMN FIRES.

IN the other gardens
And all up the vale,
From the autumn bonfires
See the smoke trail!

Pleasant summer over
And all the summer flowers,
The red fire blazes,
The grey smoke towers.

Sing a song of seasons!
Something bright in all!
Flowers in the summer,
Fires in the fall!

VII.

THE GARDENER.

THE gardener does not love to talk,
He makes me keep the gravel walk;
And when he puts his tools away,
He locks the door and takes the key.

Away behind the currant row
Where no one else but cook may go,
Far in the plots, I see him dig
Old and serious, brown and big.

He digs the flowers, green, red, and blue,
Nor wishes to be spoken to.
He digs the flowers and cuts the hay,
And never seems to want to play.

Silly gardener! summer goes,
And winter comes with pinching toes,

When in the garden bare and brown
You must lay your barrow down.

Well now, and while the summer stays,
To profit by these garden days
O how much wiser you would be
To play at Indian wars with me!

VIII.

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS.

DEAR Uncle Jim, this garden ground
That now you smoke your pipe around,
Has seen immortal actions done
And valiant battles lost and won.

Here we had best on tip-toe tread,
While I for safety march ahead,
For this is that enchanted ground
Where all who loiter slumber sound.

Here is the sea, here is the sand,
Here is simple Shepherd's Land,
Here are the fairy hollyhocks,
And there are Ali Baba's rocks.

But yonder, see! apart and high,
Frozen Siberia lies; where I,
With Robert Bruce and William Tell,
Was bound by an enchanter's spell.

ENVOYS.

I.

TO WILLIE AND HENRIETTA.

If two may read aright
These rhymes of old delight
And house and garden play,
You two, my cousins, and you only, may.

You in a garden green
With me were king and queen,
Were hunter, soldier, tar,
And all the thousand things that children are.

Now in the elders' seat
We rest with quiet feet,
And from the window-bay
We watch the children, our successors, play.

"Time was," the golden head
Irrevocably said;
But time, which none can bind,
While flowing fast away, leaves love behind.

II.

TO MY MOTHER.

You too, my mother, read my rhymes
For love of unforgotten times,
And you may chance to hear once more
The little feet along the floor.

III.

TO AUNTIE.

*CHIEF of our aunts — not only I,
But all your dozen of nurselings cry —
What did the other children do?
And what were childhood, wanting you?*

IV.

TO MINNIE.

THE red room with the giant bed
Where none but elders laid their head;
The little room where you and I
Did for awhile together lie
And, simple suitor, I your hand
In decent marriage did demand;
The great day nursery, best of all,
With pictures pasted on the wall
And leaves upon the blind —
A pleasant room wherein to wake
And hear the leafy garden shake
And rustle in the wind —
And pleasant there to lie in bed
And see the pictures overhead —
The wars about Sebastopol,
The grinning guns along the wall,
The daring escalade,

The plunging ships, the bleating sheep,
The happy children ankle-deep
And laughing as they wade:
All these are vanished clean away,
And the old manse is changed to-day;
It wears an altered face
And shields a stranger race.
The river, on from mill to mill,
Flows past our childhood's garden still;
But ah! we children never more
Shall watch it from the water-door!
Below the yew—it still is there—
Our phantom voices haunt the air
As we were still at play,
And I can hear them call and say:
"How far is it to Babylon?"

Ah, far enough, my dear,
Far, far enough from here—
Yet you have farther gone!
"Can I get there by candlelight?"
So goes the old refrain.
I do not know—perchance you might—
But only, children, hear it right,

Ah, never to return again!
The eternal dawn, beyond a doubt,
Shall break on hill and plain,
And put all stars and candles out
Ere we be young again.

To you in distant India, these
I send across the seas,
Nor count it far across.
For which of us forgets
The Indian cabinets,
The bones of antelope, the wings of albatross,
The pied and painted birds and beans,
The junks and bangles, beads and screens,
The gods and sacred bells,
And the loud-humming, twisted shells!
The level of the parlour floor
Was honest, homely, Scottish shore;
But when we climbed upon a chair,
Behold the gorgeous East was there!
Be this a fable; and behold
Me in the parlour as of old,
And Minnie just above me set
In the quaint Indian cabinet!

Smiling and kind, you grace a shelf
Too high for me to reach myself.
Reach down a hand, my dear, and take
These rhymes for old acquaintance' sake!

V.

TO MY NAME-CHILD.

I.

SOME day soon this rhyming volume, if you
learn with proper speed,
Little Louis Sanchez, will be given you to
read.

Then shall you discover, that your name was
printed down

By the English printers, long before, in London
town.

In the great and busy city where the East
and West are met,

All the little letters did the English printer set;
While you thought of nothing, and were still
too young to play,

Foreign people thought of you in places far
away.

Ay, and while you slept, a baby, over all the
English lands

Other little children took the volume in their
hands;

Other children questioned, in their homes across
the seas:

Who was little Louis, won't you tell us, mother,
please?

II.

Now that you have spelt your lesson, lay it
down and go and play,
Seeking shells and seaweed on the sands of
Monterey,
Watching all the mighty whalebones, lying
buried by the breeze,
Tiny sandy-pipers, and the huge Pacific seas.

And remember in your playing, as the sea-fog
rolls to you,
Long ere you could read it, how I told you
what to do;
And that while you thought of no one, nearly
half the world away
Some one thought of Louis on the beach of
Monterey!

VI.

TO ANY READER.

As from the house your mother sees
You playing round the garden trees,
So you may see, if you will look
Through the windows of this book,
Another child, far, far away,
And in another garden, play.
But do not think you can at all,
By knocking on the window, call
That child to hear you. He intent
Is all on his play-business bent.
He does not hear; he will not look,
Nor yet be lured out of this book.
For, long ago, the truth to say,
He has grown up and gone away,
And it is but a child of air
That lingers in the garden there.

THE SONG OF RAHÉRO.

TO ORI A ORI.

*Ori, my brother in the island mode,
In every tongue and meaning much my friend,
This story of your country and your clan,
In your loved house, your too much honoured guest,
I made in English. Take it, being done;
And let me sign it with the name you gave.*

TERIITERA.

THE SONG OF RAHÉRO: A LEGEND OF TAHITI.

I. THE SLAYING OF TÁMATÉA.

It fell in the days of old, as the men of
Taiárapu tell,

A youth went forth to the fishing, and fortune
favoured him well.

Támatéa his name: gullible, simple, and kind,
Comely of countenance, nimble of body,
empty of mind,

His mother ruled him and loved him beyond
the wont of a wife,

Serving the lad for eyes and living herself in
his life.

Alone from the sea and the fishing came
Támatéa the fair,

Urging his boat to the beach, and the mother
awaited him there,

—“Long may you live!” said she. . “Your fishing has sped to a wish.

And now let us choose for the king the fairest
of all your fish. 10

For fear inhabits the palace and grudging
grows in the land,

Marked is the sluggardly foot and marked the
niggardly hand,

The hours and the miles are counted, the
tributes numbered and weighed,

And woe to him that comes short, and woe to
him that delayed!”

So spoke on the beach the mother, and coun-
selling the wiser thing.

For Rahéro stirred in the country and secretly
mined the king.

Nor were the signals wanting of how the
leaven wrought,

In the cords of obedience loosed and the
tributes grudgingly brought.

And when last to the temple of Oro the boat
with the victim sped,

And the priest uncovered the basket and
looked on the face of the dead, 20
Trembling fell upon all at sight of an ominous
thing,
For there was the aito¹ dead, and he of the
house of the king.

So spake on the beach the mother, matter
worthy of note,
And wattled a basket well, and chose a fish
from the boat;
And Támatéa the pliable shouldered the basket
and went,
And travelled, and sang as he travelled, a lad
that was well content.
Still the way of his going was round by the
roaring coast,
Where the ring of the reef is broke and the
trades run riot the most.
On his left, with smoke as of battle, the bil-
lows battered the land;
Unscalable, turreted mountains rose on the
inner hand. 30

And cape, and village, and river, and vale,
and mountain above,

Each had a name in the land for men to re-
member and love;

And never the name of a place, but lo! a
song in its praise:

Ancient and unforgotten, songs of the earlier
days,

That the elders taught to the young, and at
night, in the full of the moon,

Garlanded boys and maidens sang together in
tune.

Támatéa the placable went with a lingering
foot;

He sang as loud as a bird, he whistled hoarse
as a flute;

He broiled in the sun, he breathed in the
grateful shadow of trees,

In the icy stream of the rivers he waded over
the knees;

40

And still in his empty mind crowded, a thou-
sand-fold,

The deeds of the strong and the songs of the
cunning heroes of old.

And now was he come to a place Taiárapu
honoured the most,
Where a silent valley of woods debouched on
the noisy coast,
Spewing a level river. There was a haunt of Pai.²
There, in his potent youth, when his parents
drove him to die,
Honoura lived like a beast, lacking the lamp
and the fire,
Washed by the rains of the trade and clotting
his hair in the mire;
And there, so mighty his hands, he bent the
tree to his foot—
So keen the spur of his hunger, he plucked it
naked of fruit. 50
There, as she pondered the clouds for the
shadow of coming ills,
Ahupu, the woman of song, walked on high
on the hills.
Of these was Rahéro sprung, a man of a godly
race;
And inherited cunning of spirit and beauty of
body and face.

Of yore in his youth, as an aito, Rahéro wandered the land,

Delighting maids with his tongue, smiting men with his hand.

Famous he was in his youth; but before the midst of his life

Paused, and fashioned a song of farewell to glory and strife.

*House of mine (it went), house upon the sea,
Belov'd of all my fathers, more belov'd by
me!*

60

*Vale of the strong Honoura, deep ravine of
Pai,*

*Again in your woody summits I hear the
trade-wind cry.*

*House of mine, in your walls, strong sounds
the sea,*

*Of all sounds on earth, dearest sound to me.
I have heard the applause of men, I have
heard it arise and die:*

*Sweeter now in my house I hear the trade-
wind cry.*

These were the words of his singing, other the
thought of his heart;

For secret desire of glory vexed him, dwelling
apart.

Lazy and crafty he was, and loved to lie in
the sun,

And loved the cackle of talk and the true word
uttered in fun; 70

Lazy he was, his roof was ragged, his table
was lean,

And the fish swam safe in his sea, and he
gathered the near and the green.

He sat in his house and laughed, but he
loathed the king of the land,

And he uttered the grudging word under the
covering hand.

Treason spread from his door; and he looked
for a day to come,

A day of the crowding people, a day of the
summoning drum,

When the vote should be taken, the king be
driven forth in disgrace,

And Rahéro, the laughing and lazy, sit and
rule in his place.

Here Támatéa came, and beheld the house on
the brook;

And Rahéro was there by the way and covered
an oven to cook.³ 80

Naked he was to the loins, but the tattoo covered
the lack,

And the sun and the shadow of palms dappled
his muscular back.

Swiftly he lifted his head at the fall of the
coming feet,

And the water sprang in his mouth with a
sudden desire of meat;

For he marked the basket carried, covered
from flies and the sun;⁴

And Rahéro buried his fire, but the meat in
his house was done.

Forth he stepped; and took, and delayed the
boy, by the hand;

And vaunted the joys of meat and the ancient
ways of the land:

—“Our sires of old in Taiárapu, they that
created the race,

Ate ever with eager hand, nor regarded season
or place, 90

Ate in the boat at the oar, on the way afoot;
and at night

Arose in the midst of dreams to rummage the
house for a bite.

It is good for the youth in his turn to follow
the way of the sire;

And behold how fitting the time! for here do
I cover my fire."

—"I see the fire for the cooking but never
the meat to cook,"

Said Tāmatéa. — "Tut!" said Rahéro. "Here
in the brook

And there in the tumbling sea, the fishes are
thick as flies,

Hungry like healthy men, and like pigs for
savour and size:

Crayfish crowding the river, sea-fish thronging
the sea."

—"Well it may be," says the other, "and yet
be nothing to me. 100

Fain would I eat, but alas! I have needful
matter in hand,

Since I carry my tribute of fish to the jealous king of the land."

Now at the word a light sprang in Rahéro's eyes.

"I will gain me a dinner," thought he, "and lend the king a surprise."

And he took the lad by the arm, as they stood by the side of the track,

And smiled, and rallied, and flattered, and pushed him forward and back.

It was "You that sing like a bird, I never have heard you sing,"

And "The lads when I was a lad were none so feared of a king.

And of what account is an hour, when the heart is empty of guile?

But come, and sit in the house and laugh with the women awhile;

110

And I will but drop my hook, and behold! the dinner made."

So Támatéa the pliable hung up his fish in the shade

On a tree by the side of the way; and Rahéro
carried him in,
Smiling as smiles the fowler when flutters the
bird to the gin,
And chose him a shining hook,⁵ and viewed it
with sedulous eye,
And breathed and burnished it well on the
brawn of his naked thigh,
And set a mat for the gull, and bade him be
merry and bide,
Like a man concerned for his guest, and the
fishing, and nothing beside.

Now when Rahéro was forth, he paused and
hearkened, and heard
The gull jest in the house and the women
laugh at his word; 120
And stealthily crossed to the side of the way
to the shady place
Where the basket hung on a mango; and craft
transfigured his face.
Deftly he opened the basket, and took of the
fat of the fish,

The cut of kings and chieftains, enough for a
goodly dish.

This he wrapped in a leaf, set on the fire to
cook

And buried; and next the marred remains of
the tribute he took,

And doubled and packed them well, and covered
the basket close

—“There is a buffet, my king,” quoth he,
“and a nauseous dose!”—

And hung the basket again in the shade, in a
cloud of flies

—“And there is a sauce to your dinner, king
of the crafty eyes!”

130

Soon as the oven was open, the fish smelt excellent good.

In the shade, by the house of Rahéro, down
they sat to their food,

And cleared the leaves⁶ in silence, or uttered
a jest and laughed,

And raising the cocoanut bowls, buried their
faces and quaffed.

But chiefly in silence they ate; and soon as
the meal was done,
Rahéro feigned to remember and measured the
hour by the sun,
And "Támatéa," quoth he, "it is time to be
jogging, my lad."

So Támatéa arose, doing ever the thing he
was bade,

And carelessly shouldered the basket, and
kindly saluted his host;

And again the way of his going was round by
the roaring coast. 140

Long he went; and at length was aware of a
pleasant green,

And the stems and shadows of palms, and
roofs of lodges between.

There sate, in the door of his palace, the king,
on a kingly seat,

And aitos stood armed around, and the yot-
towas⁷ sat at his feet.

But fear was a worm in his heart: fear darted
his eyes;

And he probed men's faces for treasons and
pondered their speech for lies.

To him came Támatéa, the basket slung in his
hand,

And paid him the due obeisance standing as
vassals stand.

In silence hearkened the king, and closed the
eyes in his face,

Harbouring odious thoughts and the baseless
fears of the base; 150

In silence accepted the gift and sent the giver
away.

So Támatéa departed, turning his back on the
day.

And lo! as the king sat brooding, a rumour
rose in the crowd;

The yottowas nudged and whispered, the com-
mons murmured aloud;

Tittering fell upon all at sight of the impudent
thing,

At the sight of a gift unroyal flung in the face
of a king.

And the face of the king turned white and red
with anger and shame
In their midst; and the heart in his body was
water and then was flame;
Till of a sudden, turning, he gripped an aito
hard,
A youth that stood with his ómare,⁸ one of the
daily guard, 160
And spat in his ear a command, and pointed
and uttered a name,
And hid in the shade of the house his impo-
tent anger and shame.

Now Támatéa the fool was far on the home-
ward way,
The rising night in his face, behind him the
dying day.
Rahéro saw him go by, and the heart of
Rahéro was glad,
Devising shame to the king and nowise harm
to the lad;
And all that dwelt by the way saw and saluted
him well,

For he had the face of a friend and the news
of the town to tell;
And pleased with the notice of folk, and
pleased that his journey was done,
Támatéa drew homeward, turning his back to
the sun.

170

And now was the hour of the bath in Tai-
árapu: far and near
The lovely laughter of bathers rose and de-
lighted his ear.
Night massed in the valleys; the sun on the
mountain coast
Struck, end-long; and above the clouds em-
battled their host,
And glowed and gloomed on the heights; and
the heads of the palms were gems,
And far to the rising eve extended the shade
of their stems;
And the shadow of Támatéa hovered already
at home.

And sudden the sound of one coming and
running light as the foam

Struck on his ear; and he turned, and lo! a
man on his track,
Girded and armed with an ómare, following
hard at his back. 180
At a bound the man was upon him; — and, or
ever a word was said,
The loaded end of the ómare fell and laid him
dead.

II. THE VENGEING OF TÁMATÉA.

Thus was Rahéro's treason; thus and no further
it sped.

The king sat safe in his place and a kindly
fool was dead.

But the mother of Támatéa arose with death
in her eyes.

All night long, and the next, Taiárapu rang
with her cries.

As when a babe in the wood turns with a chill
of doubt

And perceives nor home, nor friends, for the
trees have closed her about,

The mountain rings and her breast is torn with
the voice of despair:

So the lion-like woman idly wearied the air
For awhile, and pierced men's hearing in vain,
and wounded their hearts. 191

But as when the weather changes at sea, in
dangerous parts,

And sudden the hurricane wrack unrolls up the
front of the sky,

At once the ship lies idle, the sails hang silent
on high,

The breath of the wind that blew is blown out
like the flame of a lamp,

And the silent armies of death draw near with
inaudible tramp:

So sudden, the voice of her weeping ceased;
in silence she rose

And passed from the house of her sorrow, a
woman clothed with repose,

Carrying death in her breast and sharpening
death with her hand.

Hither she went and thither in all the coasts
of the land.

They tell that she feared not to slumber alone,
in the dead of night,
In accursed places; beheld, unblenched, the
ribbon of light⁹
Spin from temple to temple; guided the peril-
ous skiff,
Abhorred not the paths of the mountain and
trod the verge of the cliff;
From end to end of the island, thought not
the distance long,
But forth from king to king carried the tale
of her wrong.
To king after king, as they sat in the palace
door, she came,
Claiming kinship, declaiming verses, naming
her name
And the names of all of her fathers; and still,
with a heart on the rack,
Jested to capture a hearing and laughed when
they jested back: 210
So would deceive them awhile, and change and
return in a breath,
And on all the men of Vaiau imprecate instant
death;

And tempt her kings — for Vaiau was a rich
and prosperous land,
And flatter — for who would attempt it but
warriors mighty of hand?
And change in a breath again and rise in a
strain of song,
Invoking the beaten drums, beholding the fall
of the strong,
Calling the fowls of the air to come and feast
on the dead.
And they held the chin in silence, and heard
her, and shook the head;
For they knew the men of Taiárapu famous in
battle and feast,
Marvellous eaters and smiters: the men of
Vaiau not least.

220

To the land of the Námunu-úra,¹⁰ to Paea, at
length she came,
To men who were foes to the Tevas and hated
their race and name.
There was she well received, and spoke with
Hiopa the king.¹¹

And Hiopa listened, and weighed, and wisely
considered the thing.

“Here in the back of the isle we dwell in a
sheltered place,”

Quoth he to the woman, “in quiet, a weak
and peaceable race.

But far in the teeth of the wind lofty Taiárapu
lies;

Strong blows the wind of the trade on its sea-
ward face, and cries

Aloud in the top of arduous mountains, and
utters its song

In green continuous forests. Strong is the
wind, and strong 230

And fruitful and hardy the race, famous in
battle and feast,

Marvellous eaters and smiters: the men of
Vaiau not least.

Now hearken to me, my daughter, and hear a
word of the wise:

How a strength goes linked with a weakness,
two by two, like the eyes.

They can wield the ómare well and cast the
javelin far;

Yet are they greedy and weak as the swine and
the children are.

Plant we, then, here at Paea, a garden of excellent fruits;

Plant we bananas and kava, and taro, the king
of roots;

Let the pigs in Paea be tapu¹² and no man
fish for a year;

And of all the meat in Tahiti gather we three-
fold here.

240

So shall the fame of our plenty fill the island,
and so,

At last, on the tongue of rumour, go where
we wish it to go.

Then shall the pigs of Taiárapu raise their
snouts in the air;

But we sit quiet and wait, as the fowler sits
by the snare,

And tranquilly fold our hands, till the pigs
come nosing the food:

But meanwhile build us a house of Trotéa, the
stubborn wood,

Bind it with incombustible thongs, set a roof
to the room,
Too strong for the hands of a man to dis sever
or fire to consume;
And there, when the pigs come trotting, there
shall the feast be spread,
There shall the eye of the morn enlighten the
feasters dead. 250
So be it done; for I have a heart that pities
your state,
And Nateva and Námunu-úra are fire and water
for hate."

All was done as he said, and the gardens
prospered; and now
The fame of their plenty went out, and word
of it came to Vaiau.
For the men of Námunu-úra sailed, to the
windward far,
Lay in the offing by south where the towns of
the Tevas are,
And cast overboard of their plenty; and lo! at
the Tevas' feet

The surf on all of the beaches tumbled treasures of meat.

In the salt of the sea, a harvest tossed with the reflux foam;

And the children gleaned it in playing, and ate and carried it home; 260

And the elders stared and debated, and wondered and passed the jest,

But whenever a guest came by eagerly questioned the guest;

And little by little, from one to another, the word went round:

“In all the borders of Paea the victual rots on the ground,

And swine are plenty as rats. And now, when they fare to the sea,

The men of the Námunu-úra glean from under the tree

And load the canoe to the gunwale with all that is toothsome to eat;

And all day long on the sea the jaws are crushing the meat,

The steersman eats at the helm, the rowers munch at the oar,

And at length, when their bellies are full,
overboard with the store!" 270

Now was the word made true, and soon as the
bait was bare,
All the pigs of Taiárapu raised their snouts in
the air.

Songs were recited, and kinship was counted,
and tales were told

How war had severed of late but peace had
cemented of old

The clans of the island. "To war," said they,
"now set we an end,

And hie to the Námunu-úra even as a friend
to a friend."

So judged, and a day was named; and soon
as the morning broke,

Canoes were thrust in the sea and the houses
emptied of folk.

Strong blew the wind of the south, the wind
that gathers the clan;

Along all the line of the reef the clamorous
surges ran; 280

And the clouds were piled on the top of the
island mountain-high,

A mountain throned on a mountain. The fleet
of canoes swept by

In the midst, on the green lagoon, with a
crew released from care,

Sailing an even water, breathing a summer
air,

Cheered by a cloudless sun; and ever to left
and right,

Bursting surge on the reef, drenching storms
on the height.

So the folk of Vaiau sailed and were glad all
day,

Coasting the palm-tree cape and crossing the
populous bay

By all the towns of the Tevas; and still as
they bowled along,

Boat would answer to boat with jest and
laughter and song,

290

And the people of all the towns trooped to
the sides of the sea

And gazed from under the hand or sprang aloft
on the tree,

Hailing and cheering. Time failed them for
more to do;
The holiday village careened to the wind, and
was gone from view
Swift as a passing bird; and ever as onward it
bore,
Like the cry of the passing bird, bequeathed
its song to the shore —
Desirable laughter of maids and the cry of
delight of the child.
And the gazer, left behind, stared at the wake
and smiled.

By all the towns of the Tevas they went, and
Pápara last,
The home of the chief, the place of muster in
war; and passed 300
The march of the lands of the clan, to the
lands of an alien folk.
And there, from the dusk of the shoreside
palms, a column of smoke
Mounted and wavered and died in the gold of
the setting sun,

“Paea!” they cried. “It is Paea.” And so
was the voyage done.

In the early fall of the night, Hiopa came to
the shore,
And beheld and counted the comers, and lo,
they were forty score:
The pelting feet of the babes that ran already
and played,
The clean-lipped smile of the boy, the slender
breasts of the maid,
And mighty limbs of women, stalwart mothers
of men.
The sires stood forth unabashed; but a little
back from his ken 310
Clustered the scarcely nubile, the lads and
maids, in a ring,
Fain of each other, afraid of themselves, aware
of the king
And aping behaviour, but clinging together
with hands and eyes,
With looks that were kind like kisses, and
laughter tender as sighs.

There, too, the grandsire stood, raising his
silver crest,
And the impotent hands of a suckling groped
in his barren breast.
The childhood of love, the pair well married,
the innocent brood,
The tale of the generations repeated and ever
renewed —
Hiopa beheld them together, all the ages of
man, 319
And a moment shook in his purpose.

But these were the foes of his clan,
And he trod upon pity, and came, and civilly
greeted the king,
And gravely entreated Rahéro; and for all that
could fight or sing,
And claimed a name in the land, had fitting
phrases of praise;
But with all who were well-descended he spoke
of the ancient days.
And "'T is true," said he, "that in Paea the
victual rots on the ground;

But, friends, your number is many; and pigs
must be hunted and found,

And the lads troop to the mountains to bring
the féis down,

And around the bowls of the kava cluster the
maids of the town.

So, for to-night, sleep here; but king, common,
and priest

330

To-morrow, in order due, shall sit with me in
the feast."

Sleepless the live-long night, Hiopa's followers
toiled.

The pigs screamed and were slaughtered; the
spars of the guest-house oiled,

The leaves spread on the floor. In many a
mountain glen

The moon drew shadows of trees on the naked
bodies of men

Plucking and bearing fruits; and in all the
bounds of the town

Red glowed the cocoanut fires, and were buried
and trodden down.

Thus did seven of the yottowas toil with their
tale of the clan,

But the eighth wrought with his lads, hid from
the sight of man.

In the deeps of the woods they laboured, piling
the fuel high 340

In faggots, the load of a man, fuel seasoned and
dry,

Thirsty to seize upon fire and apt to blurt into
flame.

And now was the day of the feast. The for-
ests, as morning came,

Tossed in the wind, and the peaks quaked in
the blaze of the day

And the cocoanuts showered on the ground,
rebounding and rolling away:

A glorious morn for a feast, a famous wind for
a fire.

To the hall of feasting Hiopa led them,
mother and sire

And maid and babe in a tale, the whole of
the holiday throng.

Smiling they came, garlanded green, not
dreaming of wrong;

And for every three, a pig, tenderly cooked in
the ground, 350

Waited; and féi, the staff of life, heaped in
a mound

For each where he sat;—for each, bananas
roasted and raw

Piled with a bountiful hand, as for horses hay
and straw

Are stacked in a stable; and fish, the food of
desire,¹⁸

And plentiful vessels of sauce, and breadfruit
gilt in the fire;—

And kava was common as water. Feasts have
there been ere now,

And many, but never a feast like that of the
folk of Vaiau.

All day long they ate with the resolute greed
of brutes,

And turned from the pigs to the fish, and
again from the fish to the fruits,

And emptied the vessels of sauce, and drank
of the kava deep; 360

Till the young lay stupid as stones, and the
strongest nodded to sleep.

Sleep that was mighty as death and blind as a
moonless night

Tethered them hand and foot; and their souls
were drowned, and the light

Was cloaked from their eyes. Senseless to-
gether, the old and the young,

The fighter deadly to smite and the prater
cunning of tongue,

The woman wedded and fruitful, inured to the
pangs of birth,

And the maid that knew not of kisses, blindly
sprawled on the earth.

From the hall Hiopa the king and his chiefs
came stealthily forth.

Already the sun hung low and enlightened the
peaks of the north;

But the wind was stubborn to die and blew as
it blows at morn,

Showering the nuts in the dusk, and e'en as a
banner is torn,

High on the peaks of the island, shattered the
mountain cloud.

And now at once, at a signal, a silent, emu-
lous crowd

Set hands to the work of death, hurrying to
and fro,

Like ants, to furnish the faggots, building them
broad and low,

And piling them high and higher around the
walls of the hall.

Silence persisted within, for sleep lay heavy on
all.

But the mother of Tāmatéa stood at Hiopa's
side,

And shook for terror and joy like a girl that
is a bride.

Night fell on the toilers, and first Hiopa the
wise

380

Made the round of the house, visiting all with
his eyes;

And all was piled to the eaves, and fuel
blockaded the door;

And within, in the house beleaguered, slumbered
the forty score.

Then was an aito despatched and came with
fire in his hand,
And Hiopa took it. — “Within,” said he, “is
the life of a land;
And behold! I breathe on the coal, I breathe
on the dales of the east,
And silence falls on forest and shore; the voice
of the feast
Is quenched, and the smoke of cooking; the
rooftree decays and falls
On the empty lodge, and the winds subvert
deserted walls.”

Therewithal, to the fuel, he laid the glowing
coal; 390
And the redness ran in the mass and burrowed
within like a mole,
And copious smoke was conceived. But, as
when a dam is to burst,
The water lips it and crosses in silver trickles
at first,
And then, of a sudden, whelms and bears it
away forthright:

So now, in a moment, the flame sprang and
towered in the night,
And wrestled and roared in the wind, and high
over house and tree,
Stood, like a streaming torch, enlightening land
and sea.

But the mother of Támatéa threw her arms
abroad,

“Pyre of my son,” she shouted, “debited ven-
geance of God,

Late, late, I behold you, yet I behold you at
last,

400

And glory, beholding! For now are the days
of my agony past,

The lust that famished my soul now eats and
drinks its desire,

And they that encompassed my son shrivel
alive in the fire.

Tenfold precious the vengeance that comes
after lingering years!

Ye quenched the voice of my singer?—hark,
in your dying ears,

The song of the conflagration! Ye left me a
widow alone?
—Behold, the whole of your race consumes,
sinew and bone
And torturing flesh together: man, mother, and
maid
Heaped in a common shambles; and already,
borne by the trade,
The smoke of your dissolution darkens the stars
of night.”

410

Thus she spoke, and her stature grew in the
people's sight.

III. RAHÉRO.

Rahéro was there in the hall asleep: beside
him his wife,
Comely, a mirthful woman, one that delighted
in life;
And a girl that was ripe for marriage, shy and
sly as a mouse;
And a boy, a climber of trees: all the hopes
of his house.

Unwary, with open hands, he slept in the
midst of his folk,

And dreamed that he heard a voice crying
without, and awoke,

Leaping blindly afoot like one from a dream
that he fears.

A hellish glow and clouds were about him;—
it roared in his ears

Like the sound of the cataract fall that plunges
sudden and steep; 420

And Rahéro swayed as he stood, and his reason
was still asleep.

Now the flame struck hard on the house, wind-
wielded, a fracturing blow,

And the end of the roof was burst and fell on
the sleepers below;

And the lofty hall, and the feast, and the pros-
trate bodies of folk,

Shone red in his eyes a moment, and then
were swallowed of smoke.

In the mind of Rahéro clearness came; and he
opened his throat;

And as when a squall comes sudden, the strain-
ing sail of a boat

Thunders aloud and bursts, so thundered the
voice of the man.

—“The wind and the rain!” he shouted, the
mustered word of the clan,¹⁴

And “Up!” and “To arms, men of Vaiau!”

But silence replied, 430

Or only the voice of the gusts of the fire, and
nothing beside.

Rahéro stooped and groped. He handled his
womankind,

But the fumes of the fire and the kava had
quenched the life of their mind,

And they lay like pillars prone; and his hand
encountered the boy,

And there sprang in the gloom of his soul a
sudden lightning of joy.

“Him can I save!” he thought, “if I were
speedy enough.”

And he loosened the cloth from his loins, and
swaddled the child in the stuff;

And about the strength of his neck he knotted
the burden well.

There where the roof had fallen, it roared like
the mouth of hell.

Thither Rahéro went, stumbling on senseless
folk, 44°

And grappled a post of the house, and began
to climb in the smoke:

The last alive of Vaiau: and the son borne by
the sire.

The post glowed in the grain with ulcers of
eating fire,

And the fire bit to the blood and mangled his
hands and thighs;

And the fumes sang in his head like wine and
stung in his eyes;

And still he climbed, and came to the top,
the place of proof,

And thrust a hand through the flame, and
clambered alive on the roof.

But even as he did so, the wind, in a garment
of flames and pain,

Wrapped him from head to heel; and the waist-
cloth parted in twain;

And the living fruit of his loins dropped in
the fire below. 45°

About the blazing feast-house clustered the
eyes of the foe,
Watching, hand upon weapon, lest ever a soul
should flee,
Shading the brow from the glare, straining the
neck to see.
Only, to leeward, the flames in the wind swept
far and wide,
And the forest sputtered on fire; and there
might no man abide.
Thither Rahéro crept, and dropped from the
burning eaves,
And crouching low to the ground, in a treble
covert of leaves
And fire and volleying smoke, ran for the life
of his soul
Unseen; and behind him, under a furnace of
ardent coal,
Cairned with a wonder of flame, and blotting
the night with smoke, 460
Blazed and were smelted together the bones of
all his folk.

He fled unguided at first; but hearing the
breakers roar,
Thitherward shaped his way, and came at length
to the shore.
Sound-limbed he was: dry-eyed; but smarted
in every part;
And the mighty cage of his ribs heaved on
his straining heart
With sorrow and rage. And "Fools!" he
cried, "fools of Vaiau,
Heads of swine — gluttons — Alas! and where
are they now?
Those that I played with, those that nursed
me, those that I nursed?
God, and I outliving them! I, the least and
the worst —
I, that thought myself crafty, snared by this
herd of swine,
In the tortures of hell and desolate, stripped
of all that was mine:
All! — my friends and my fathers — the silver
heads of yore
That trooped to the council, the children that
ran to the open door

Crying with innocent voices and clasping a
father's knees!

And mine, my wife — my daughter — my sturdy
climber of trees,

Ah, never to climb again!"

Thus in the dusk of the night,
(For clouds rolled in the sky and the moon
was swallowed from sight,)

Pacing and gnawing his fists, Rahéro raged by
the shore.

Vengeance: that must be his. But much was
to do before; 480

And first a single life to be snatched from a
deadly place,

A life, the root of revenge, surviving plant of
the race:

And next the race to be raised anew, and the
lands of the clan

Repeopled. So Rahéro designed, a prudent man
Even in wrath, and turned for the means of
revenge and escape:

A boat to be seized by stealth, a wife to be
taken by rape.

Still was the dark lagoon; beyond on the coral
wall,

He saw the breakers shine, he heard them
bellow and fall.

Alone, on the top of the reef, a man with a
flaming brand

Walked, gazing and pausing, a fish-spear
poised in his hand. 490

The foam boiled to his calf when the mightier
breakers came,

And the torch shed in the wind scattering tufts
of flame.

Afar on the dark lagoon a canoe lay idly at
wait:

A figure dimly guiding it: surely the fisher-
man's mate.

Rahéro saw and he smiled. He straightened
his mighty thews:

Naked, with never a weapon, and covered
with scorch and bruise,

He straightened his arms, he filled the void of
his body with breath,

And, strong as the wind in his manhood,
doomed the fisher to death.

Silent he entered the water, and silently swam,
and came

There where the fisher walked, holding on high
the flame. 500

Loud on the pier of the reef volleyed the
breach of the sea;

And hard at the back of the man, Rahéro
crept to his knee

On the coral, and suddenly sprang and seized
him, the elder hand

Clutching the joint of his throat, the other
snatching the brand

Ere it had time to fall, and holding it steady
and high.

Strong was the fisher, brave, and swift of mind
and of eye —

Strongly he threw in the clutch; but Rahéro
resisted the strain,

And jerked, and the spine of life snapped
with a crack in twain,

And the man came slack in his hands and
tumbled a lump at his feet.

One moment: and there, on the reef, where
the breakers whitened and beat, 510

Rahéro was standing alone, glowing and
scorched and bare,

A victor unknown of any, raising the torch in
the air.

But once he drank of his breath, and instantly
set him to fish

Like a man intent upon supper at home and
a savoury dish.

For what should the woman have seen? A
man with a torch — and then

A moment's blur of the eyes — and a man with
a torch again.

And the torch had scarcely been shaken. "Ah,
surely," Rahéro said,

"She will deem it a trick of the eyes, a fancy
born in the head;

But time must be given the fool to nourish a
fool's belief."

So for a while, a sedulous fisher, he walked the
reef, 520

Pausing at times and gazing, striking at times
with the spear:

— Lastly, uttered the call; and even as the
boat drew near,
Like a man that was done with its use, tossed
the torch in the sea.

Lightly he leaped on the boat beside the
woman; and she
Lightly addressed him, and yielded the paddle
and place to sit;
For now the torch was extinguished the night
was black as the pit.

Rahéro set him to row, never a word he spoke,
And the boat sang in the water urged by his
vigorous stroke.

— “What ails you?” the woman asked, “and
why did you drop the brand?

We have only to kindle another as soon as we
come to land.” 530

Never a word Rahéro replied, but urged the
canoe.

And a chill fell on the woman. — “Atta! speak!
is it you?

Speak! Why are you silent? Why do you
bend aside?

Wherefore steer to the seaward?" thus she
panted and cried.

Never a word from the oarsman, toiling there
in the dark;

But right for a gate of the reef he silently
headed the bark,

And wielding the single paddle with passionate
sweep on sweep,

Drove her, the little fitted, forth on the open
deep.

And fear, there where she sat, froze the woman
to stone:

Not fear of the crazy boat and the weltering
deep alone;

540

But a keener fear of the night, the dark, and
the ghostly hour,

And the thing that drove the canoe with more
than a mortal's power

And more than a mortal's boldness. For much
she knew of the dead

That haunt and fish upon reefs, toiling, like
men, for bread,

And traffic with human fishes, or slay them and
take their ware,
Till the hour when the star of the dead¹⁵ goes
down, and the morning air
Blows, and the cocks are singing on shore.
And surely she knew
The speechless thing at her side belonged to
the grave.¹⁶

It blew

All night from the south; all night, Rahéro
contended and kept
The prow to the cresting sea; and, silent as
though she slept, 550
The woman huddled and quaked. And now
was the peep of day.
High and long on their left the mountainous
island lay;
And over the peaks of Taiárapu arrows of sun-
light struck.
On shore the birds were beginning to sing:
the ghostly ruck
Of the buried had long ago returned to the
covered grave;

And here on the sea, the woman, waxing suddenly brave,

Turned her swiftly about and looked in the face of the man.

And sure he was none that she knew, none of her country or clan:

A stranger, mother-naked, and marred with the marks of fire,

But comely and great of stature, a man to obey and admire.

560

And Rahéro regarded her also, fixed, with a frowning face,

Judging the woman's fitness to mother a war-like race.

Broad of shoulder, ample of girdle, long in the thigh,

Deep of bosom she was, and bravely supported his eye.

"Woman," said he, "last night the men of your folk —

Man, woman, and maid, smothered my race in smoke.

It was done like cowards; and I, a mighty man
of my hands,
Escaped, a single life; and now to the empty
lands
And smokeless hearths of my people, sail, with
yourself, alone.
Before your mother was born, the die of to-
day was thrown 570
And you selected:—your husband, vainly
striving, to fall
Broken between these hands:—yourself to be
severed from all,
The places, the people, you love—home, kin-
dred, and clan—
And to dwell in a desert and bear the babes
of a kinless man."

NOTES TO THE SONG OF RAHÉRO.

INTRODUCTION. — This tale, of which I have not consciously changed a single feature, I received from tradition. It is highly popular through all the country of the eight Tevas, the clan to which Rahéro belonged; and particularly in Taiárapu, the windward peninsula of Tahiti, where he lived. I have heard from end to end two versions; and as many as five different persons have helped me with details. There seems no reason why the tale should not be true.

Note 1, verse 22. "*The aito*," quasi champion, or brave. One skilled in the use of some weapon, who wandered the country challenging distinguished rivals and taking part in local quarrels. It was in the natural course of his advancement to be at last employed by a chief, or king; and it would then be a part of his duties to purvey the victim for sacrifice. One of the doomed families was indicated; the aito took his weapon and went forth alone; a little behind him bearers followed with the sacrificial basket. Sometimes the victim showed fight, sometimes prevailed; more often, without doubt, he fell. But whatever body was found, the bearers indifferently took up.

Note 2, verses 45 *et seq.* "*Pai*," "*Honoura*," and "*Ahupu*." Legendary persons of Tahiti, all natives of Taiárapu. Of the two first, I have collected singular although imperfect legends, which I hope soon to lay before the public in another place. Of Ahupu, except in

snatches of song, little memory appears to linger. She dwelt at least about Tepari, — “the sea-cliffs,” — the eastern fastness of the isle; walked by paths known only to herself upon the mountains; was courted by dangerous suitors who came swimming from adjacent islands, and defended and rescued (as I gather) by the loyalty of native fish. My anxiety to learn more of “Ahupu Vehine” became (during my stay in Taiárapu) a cause of some diversion to that mirthful people, the inhabitants.

Note 3, verse 80. “*Covered an oven.*” The cooking fire is made in a hole in the ground, and is then buried.

Note 4, verse 85. “*Flies.*” This is perhaps an anachronism. Even speaking of to-day in Tahiti, the phrase would have to be understood as referring mainly to mosquitoes, and these only in watered valleys with close woods, such as I suppose to form the surroundings of Rahéro’s homestead. Quarter of a mile away, where the air moves freely, you shall look in vain for one.

Note 5, verse 115. “*Hook*” of mother-of-pearl. Bright-hook fishing, and that with the spear, appear to be the favourite native methods.

Note 6, verse 133. “*Leaves,*” the plates of Tahiti.

Note 7, verse 144. “*Yottowas,*” so spelt for convenience of pronunciation, *quasi* Tacksmen in the Scottish Highlands. The organization of eight sub-districts and eight yottowas to a division, which was in use (until yesterday) among the Tevas, I have attributed without authority to the next clan: see verses 341-2.

Note 8, verse 160. “*Ómare,*” pronounce as a dactyl. A loaded quarter-staff, one of the two favourite weapons

of the Tahitian brave; the javelin, or casting spear, was the other.

Note 9, verse 202. "*The ribbon of light.*" Still to be seen (and heard) spinning from one marae to another on Tahiti; or so I have it upon evidence that would rejoice the Psychical Society.

Note 10, verse 221. "*Námunu-úra.*" The complete name is Namunu-ura te aropa. Why it should be pronounced Námunu, dactyllically, I cannot see, but so I have always heard it. This was the clan immediately beyond the Tevas on the south coast of the island. At the date of the tale the clan organization must have been very weak. There is no particular mention of Támatéa's mother going to Papara, to the head chief of her own clan, which would appear her natural recourse. On the other hand, she seems to have visited various lesser chiefs among the Tevas, and these to have excused themselves solely on the danger of the enterprise. The broad distinction here drawn between Nateva and Námunu-úra is therefore not ⁱⁿimpossibly anachronistic.

Note 11, verse 223. "*Hiopa the king.*" Hiopa was really the name of the king (chief) of Vaiau; but I could never learn that of the king of Paea — pronounce to rhyme with the Indian *ayah* — and I gave the name where it was most needed. This note must appear otiose indeed to readers who have never heard of either of these two gentlemen; and perhaps there is only one person in the world capable at once of reading my verses and spying the inaccuracy. For him, for Mr. Tati Salmon, hereditary high chief of the Tevas, the note is solely written: a small attention from a clansman to his chief.

Note 12, verse 239. "*Let the pigs be tapu.*" It is impossible to explain *tapu* in a note; we have it as an English word, taboo. Suffice it, that a thing which was *tapu* must not be touched, nor a place that was *tapu* visited.

Note 13, verse 354. "*Fish, the food of desire.*" There is a special word in the Tahitian language to signify *hungering after fish*. I may remark that here is one of my chief difficulties about the whole story. How did king, commons, women, and all come to eat together at this feast? But it troubled none of my numerous authorities; so there must certainly be some natural explanation.

Note 14, verse 429. "*The mustering word of the clan.*"

Teva te ua,
Teva te matai!
Teva the wind,
Teva the rain !

Note 15, verse 546. Note 16, verse 548. "*The star of the dead.*" Venus as a morning star. I have collected much curious evidence as to this belief. The dead retain their taste for a fish diet, enter into copartnery with living fishers, and haunt the reef and the lagoon. The conclusion attributed to the nameless lady of the legend would be reached to-day, under the like circumstances, by ninety per cent. of Polynesians; and here I probably understate by one-tenth.

THE FEAST OF FAMINE.



THE FEAST OF FAMINE: MARQUESAN MANNERS.

I. THE PRIEST'S VIGIL.

IN all the land of the tribe was neither fish
nor fruit,
And the deepest pit of popoi stood empty to
the foot.¹
The clans upon the left and the clans upon
the right
Now oiled their carven maces and scoured
their daggers bright;
They gat them to the thicket, to the deepest
*of the shade,
And lay with sleepless eyes in the deadly
ambuscade.
And oft in the starry even the song of morn-
ing rose,
What time the oven smoked in the country of
their foes;

For oft to loving hearts, and waiting ears and
sight,

The lads that went to forage returned not with
the night. 10

Now first the children sickened, and then the
women paled,

And the great arms of the warrior no more for
war availed.

Hushed was the deep drum, discarded was the
dance;

And those that met the priest now glanced at
him askance.

The priest was a man of years, his eyes were
ruby-red,²

He neither feared the dark nor the terrors of
the dead,

He knew the songs of races, the names of
ancient date;

And the beard upon his bosom would have
bought the chief's estate.

He dwelt in a high-built lodge, hard by the
roaring shore,

Raised on a noble terrace and with tikis³ at
the door. 20

Within it was full of riches, for he served his
nation well,
And full of the sound of breakers, like the
hollow of a shell.
For weeks he let them perish, gave never a
helping sign,
But sat on his oiled platform to commune
with the divine,
But sat on his high terrace, with the tikis by
his side,
And stared on the blue ocean, like a parrot,
ruby-eyed.

Dawn as yellow as sulphur leaped on the
mountain height:
Out on the round of the sea the gems of the
morning light,
Up from the round of the sea the streamers of
the sun;—
But down in the depths of the valley the day
was not begun.
In the blue of the woody twilight burned red
the cocoa-husk,

And the women and men of the clan went
forth to bathe in the dusk.

A word that began to go round, a word, a
whisper, a start:

Hope that leaped in the bosom, fear that
knocked on the heart:

"See, the priest is not risen—look, for his
door is fast!

He is going to name the victims; he is going
to help us at last."

Thrice rose the sun to noon; and ever, like
one of the dead,

The priest lay still in his house with the roar
of the sea in his head;

There was never a foot on the floor, there was
never a whisper of speech;

Only the leering tikis stared on the blinding
beach.

40

Again were the mountains fired, again the
morning broke;

And all the houses lay still, but the house of
the priest awoke.

Close in their covering roofs lay and trembled
the clan,

But the agéd, red-eyed priest ran forth like a
lunatic man;

And the village panted to see him in the jewels
of death again,

In the silver beards of the old and the hair of
women slain.

Frenzy shook in his limbs, frenzy shone in his
eyes,

And still and again as he ran, the valley rang
with his cries.

All day long in the land, by cliff and thicket
and den,

He ran his lunatic rounds, and howled for the
flesh of men;

50

All day long he ate not, nor ever drank of the
brook;

And all day long in their houses the people
listened and shook —

All day long in their houses they listened with
bated breath,

And never a soul went forth, for the sight of
the priest was death.

Three were the days of his running, as the
 gods appointed of yore,

Two the nights of his sleeping alone in the
 place of gore:

The drunken slumber of frenzy twice he drank
 to the lees,

On the sacred stones of the High-place under
 the sacred trees;

With a lamp at his ashen head he lay in the
 place of the feast,

And the sacred leaves of the banyan rustled
 around the priest. 60

Last, when the stated even fell upon terrace
 and tree,

And the shade of the lofty island lay leagues
 away to sea,

And all the valleys of verdure were heavy with
 manna and musk,

The wreck of the red-eyed priest came gasping
 home in the dusk.

He reeled across the village, he staggered along
 the shore,

And between the leering tikis crept groping
 through his door.

There went a stir through the lodges, the voice
of speech awoke;
Once more from the builded platforms arose
the evening smoke.
And those who were mighty in war, and those
renowned for an art
Sat in their stated seats and talked of the
morrow apart.

II. THE LOVERS.

Hark! away in the woods—for the ears of
love are sharp —
Stealthily, quietly touched, the note of the one-
stringed harp.⁴
In the lighted house of her father, why should
Taheia start?
Taheia heavy of hair, Taheia tender of
heart,
Taheia the well-descended, a bountiful dealer
in love,
Nimble of foot like the deer, and kind of eye
like the dove?

Sly and shy as a cat, with never a change of
face,

Taheia slips to the door, like one that would
breathe a space;

Saunters and pauses, and looks at the stars,
and lists to the seas;

Then sudden and swift as a cat, she plunges
under the trees. 80

Swift as a cat she runs, with her garment gath-
ered high,

Leaping, nimble of foot, running, certain of
eye;

And ever to guide her way over the smooth and
the sharp,

Ever nearer and nearer the note of the one-
stringed harp;

Till at length, in a glade of the wood, with a
naked mountain above,

The sound of the harp thrown down, and she
in the arms of her love.

“Rua!” — “Taheia!” they cry — “my heart, my
soul, and my eyes,”

And clasp and sunder and kiss, with lovely
laughter and sighs,

“Rua!” — “Taheia, my love,” — “Rua, star of
my night,
Clasp me, hold me, and love me, single spring
of delight.” 90

And Rua folded her close, he folded her near
and long,
The living knit to the living, and sang the
lover's song:

*Night, night it is, night upon the palms.
Night, night it is, the land wind has blown.
Starry, starry night, over deep and height;
Love, love in the valley, love all alone.*

“Taheia, heavy of hair, a foolish thing have
we done,
To bind what gods have sundered unkindly into
one.
Why should a lowly lover have touched Taheia's
skirt,
Taheia the well-descended, and Rua child of
the dirt?” 100

—“On high with the haka-ikis my father sits
in state,

Ten times fifty kinsmen salute him in the gate;
Round all his martial body, and in bands across
his face,

The marks of the tattooer proclaim his lofty
place.

I, too, in the hands of the cunning, in the
sacred cabin of palm,⁵

Have shrunk like the mimosa, and bleated like
the lamb;

Round half my tender body, that none shall
clasp but you,

For a crest and a fair adornment go dainty
lines of blue.

Love, love, beloved Rua, love levels all de-
grees, .

And the well-tattooed Taheia clings panting to
your knees.”

110

—“Taheia, song of the morning, how long is
the longest love?

A cry, a clasp of the hands, a star that falls
from above!

Ever at morn in the blue, and at night when
all is black,

Ever it skulks and trembles with the hunter,
Death, on its track.

Hear me, Taheia, death! For to-morrow the
priest shall awake,

And the names be named of the victims to
bleed for the nation's sake;

And first of the numbered many that shall be
slain ere noon,

Rua the child of the dirt, Rua the kinless loon.

For him shall the drum be beat, for him be
raised the song,

For him to the sacred High-place the chaunting
people throng,

120

For him the oven smoke as for a speechless
beast,

And the sire of my Taheia come greedy to the
feast."

—"Rua, be silent, spare me. Taheia closes
her ears.

Pity my yearning heart, pity my girlish years!
Flee from the cruel hands, flee from the knife
and coal,

Lie hid in the deeps of the woods, Rua, sire
of my soul!"

"Whither to flee, Taheia, whither in all of the
land?

The fires of the bloody kitchen are kindled
on every hand;

On every hand in the isle a hungry whetting
of teeth,

Eyes in the trees above, arms in the brush
beneath.

130

Patience to lie in wait, cunning to follow the
sleuth,

Abroad the foes I have fought, and at home
the friends of my youth."

"Love, love, beloved Rua, love has a clearer
eye,

Hence from the arms of love you go not forth
to die.

There, where the broken mountain drops sheer
into the glen,

There shall you find a hold from the boldest
hunter of men;

There, in the deep recess, where the sun falls
only at noon,

And only once in the night enters the light
of the moon,

Nor ever a sound but of birds, or the rain
when it falls with a shout;

For death and the fear of death beleaguer the
valley about.

140

Tapu it is, but the gods will surely pardon
despair;

Tapu, but what of that? If Rua can only
dare.

Tapu and tapu and tapu, I know they are every
one right;

But the god of every tapu is not always quick
to smite.

Lie secret there, my Rua, in the arms of awful
gods,

Sleep in the shade of the trees on the couch of
the kindly sods,

Sleep and dream of Taheia, Taheia will wake
for you;

And whenever the land wind blows and the
woods are heavy with dew,

Alone through the horror of night,⁶ with food
for the soul of her love,
Taheia the undissuaded will hurry true as the
dove."

150

"Taheia, the pit of the night crawls with
treacherous things,
Spirits of ultimate air and the evil souls of
things;
The souls of the dead, the stranglers, that
perch in the trees of the wood,
Waiters for all things human, haters of evil
and good."

"Rua, behold me, kiss me, look in my eyes
and read;
Are these the eyes of a maid that would leave
her lover in need?
Brave in the eye of day, my father ruled in
the fight;
The child of his loins, Taheia, will play the
man in the night."

So it was spoken, and so agreed, and Taheia
arose

And smiled in the stars and was gone, swift as
the swallow goes; 160

And Rua stood on the hill, and sighed, and
followed her flight,

And there were the lodges below, each with its
door alight;

From folk that sat on the terrace and drew out
the even long

Sudden crowings of laughter, monotonous drone
of song;

The quiet passage of souls over his head in
the trees;⁷

And from all around the haven the crumbling
thunder of seas.

“Farewell, my home,” said Rua. “Farewell,
O quiet seat!

To-morrow in all your valleys the drum of death
shall beat.”

III. THE FEAST.

Dawn as yellow as sulphur leaped on the naked
peak,

And all the village was stirring, for now was the
priest to speak. 170

Forth on his terrace he came, and sat with the
chief in talk;

His lips were blackened with fever, his cheeks
were whiter than chalk;

Fever clutched at his hands, fever nodded his
head,

But, quiet and steady and cruel, his eyes shone
ruby-red.

In the earliest rays of the sun the chief rose
up content;

Braves were summoned, and drummers; mes-
sengers came and went;

Braves ran to their lodges, weapons were
snatched from the wall;

The commons herded together, and fear was
over them all.

Festival dresses they wore, but the tongue was
dry in their mouth,
And the blinking eyes in their faces skirted
from north to south. 180

Now to the sacred enclosure gathered the
greatest and least,
And from under the shade of the Banyan arose
the voice of the feast,
The frenzied roll of the drum, and a swift,
monotonous song.
Higher the sun swam up; the trade wind level
and strong
Awoke in the tops of the palms and rattled the
fans aloud,
And over the garlanded heads and shining robes
of the crowd
Tossed the spiders of shadow, scattered the
jewels of sun.
Forty the tale of the drums, and the forty
throbbed like one;
A thousand hearts in the crowd, and the even
chorus of song,

Swift as the feet of a runner, trampled a thousand strong.

190

And the old men leered at the ovens and
licked their lips for the food;

And the women stared at the lads, and laughed
and looked to the wood.

As when the sweltering baker, at night, when
the city is dead,

Alone in the trough of labour treads and fashions
the bread;

So in the heat, and the reek, and the touch of
woman and man,

The naked spirit of evil kneaded the hearts of
the clan.

Now cold was at many a heart, and shaking
in many a seat;

For there were the empty baskets, but who was
to furnish the meat?

For here was the nation assembled, and there
were the ovens anigh,

And out of a thousand singers nine were numbered to die.

200

Till, of a sudden, a shock, a mace in the air, a yell,
And, struck in the edge of the crowd, the first
of the victims fell.⁸

Terror and horrible glee divided the shrinking
clan,

Terror of what was to follow, glee for a diet of
man.

Frenzy hurried the chaunt, frenzy rattled the
drums;

The nobles, high on the terrace, greedily
mouthed their thumbs;

And once and again and again, in the ignorant
crowd below,

Once and again and again descended the mur-
derous blow.

Now smoked the oven, and now, with the cut-
ting lip of a shell,

A butcher of ninety winters jointed the bodies
well.

210

Unto the carven lodge, silent, in order due,
The grandees of the nation one after one with-
drew;

And a line of laden bearers brought to the
terrace foot,

On poles across their shoulders, the last reserve
of fruit.

The victims bled for the nobles in the old appointed way;

The fruit was spread for the commons, for all
should eat to-day.

And now was the kava brewed, and now the
cocoa ran,

Now was the hour of the dance for child and
woman and man;

And mirth was in every heart, and a garland
on every head,

And all was well with the living and well with
the eight who were dead. 220

Only the chiefs and the priest talked and consulted awhile:

“To-morrow,” they said, and “To-morrow,”
and nodded and seemed to smile:

“Rua the child of dirt, the creature of common
clay,

Rua must die to-morrow, since Rua is gone
to-day.”

Out of the groves of the valley, where clear the
blackbirds sang,

Sheer from the trees of the valley the face of
the mountain sprang;

Sheer and bare it rose, unscalable barricade,
Beaten and blown against by the generous
draught of the trade.

Dawn on its fluted brow painted rainbow light,
Close on its pinnacled crown trembled the stars
at night.

230

Here and there in a cleft clustered contorted
trees,

Or the silver beard of a stream hung and swung
in the breeze.

High overhead, with a cry, the torrents leaped
for the main,

And silently sprinkled below in thin perennial
rain.

Dark in the staring noon, dark was Rua's
ravine,

Damp and cold was the air, and the face of
the cliffs was green.

Here, in the rocky pit, accursed already of
old,

On a stone in the midst of a river, Rua sat
and was cold.

“Valley of mid-day shadows, valley of silent
falls,”

Rua sang, and his voice went hollow about the
walls, 240

“Valley of shadow and rock, a doleful prison
to me,

What is the life you can give to a child of
the sun and the sea?”

And Rua arose and came to the open mouth of
the glen,

Whence he beheld the woods, and the sea, and
houses of men.

Wide blew the riotous trade, and smelt in his
nostrils good;

It bowed the boats on the bay, and tore and
divided the wood;

It smote and sundered the groves as Moses
smote with the rod,

And the streamers of all the trees blew like
banners abroad;

And ever and on, in a lull, the trade wind
brought him along
A far-off patter of drums and a far-off whisper
of song.

250

Swift as the swallow's wings, the diligent hands
on the drum
Fluttered and hurried and throbbed. "Ah, woe
that I hear you come,"
Rua cried in his grief, "a sorrowful sound to me,
Mounting far and faint from the resonant shore
of the sea!
Woe in the song! for the grave breathes in the
singers' breath,
And I hear in the tramp of the drums the beat
of the heart of death.
Home of my youth! no more, through all the
length of the years,
No more to the place of the echoes of early
laughter and tears,
No more shall Rua return; no more as the
evening ends,
To crowded eyes of welcome, to the reaching
hands of friends."

260

All day long from the High-place the drums
and the singing came,
And the even fell, and the sun went down, a
wheel of flame;
And night came gleaning the shadows and
hushing the sounds of the wood;
And silence slept on all, where Rua sorrowed
and stood.
But still from the shore of the bay the sound
of the festival rang,
And still the crowd in the High-place danced
and shouted and sang.

Now over all the isle terror was breathed abroad
Of shadowy hands from the trees and shadowy
snares in the sod;
And before the nostrils of night, the shuddering
hunter of men
Hurried, with beard on shoulder, back to his
lighted den.

270

“Taheia, here to my side!” — “Rua, my Rua,
you!”

And cold from the clutch of terror, cold with
the damp of the dew,

Taheia, heavy of hair, leaped through the dark
to his arms;
Taheia leaped to his clasp, and was folded in
from alarms.

“Rua, beloved, here, see what your love has
brought;

Coming — alas! returning — swift as the shuttle
of thought;

Returning, alas! for to-night, with the beaten
drum and the voice,

In the shine of many torches must the sleep-
less clan rejoice;

And Taheia the well-descended, the daughter of
chief and priest,

Taheia must sit in her place in the crowded
bench of the feast.” 280

So it was spoken; and she, girding her garment
high,

Fled and was swallowed of woods, swift as the
sight of an eye.

Night over isle and sea rolled her curtain of
stars.

Then a trouble awoke in the air, the east was
banded with bars;
Dawn as yellow as sulphur leaped on the
mountain height;
Dawn, in the deepest glen, fell a wonder of
light;
High and clear stood the palms in the eye of
the brightening east,
And lo! from the sides of the sea the broken
sound of the feast!
As, when in days of summer, through open
windows, the fly
Swift as a breeze and loud as a trump goes
by,
But when frosts in the field have pinched the
wintering mouse,
Blindly noses and buzzes and hums in the fire-
lit house:
So the sound of the feast gallantly trampled at
night,
So it staggered and drooped, and droned in the
morning light.

IV. THE RAID.

It chanced that as Rua sat in the valley of
 silent falls,
He heard a calling of doves from high on the
 cliffy walls.
Fire had fashioned of yore, and time had
 broken, the rocks;
There were rooting crannies for trees and
 nesting-places for flocks;
And he saw on the top of the cliffs, looking
 up from the pit of the shade,
A flicker of wings and sunshine, and trees that
 swung in the trade. 300
“The trees swing in the trade,” quoth Rua,
 doubtful of words,
“And the sun stares from the sky, but what
 should trouble the birds?”
Up from the shade he gazed, where high the
 parapet shone,
And he was aware of a ledge and of things that
 moved thereon.

“What manner of things are these? Are they
spirits abroad by day?

Or the foes of my clan that are come, bringing
death by a perilous way?”

The valley was gouged like a vessel, and round
like the vessel's lip,

With a cape of the side of the hill thrust forth
like the bows of a ship.

On the top of the face of the cape a volley of
sun struck fair,

And the cape overhung like a chin a gulph of
sunless air.

310

“Silence, heart! What is that?—that, that
flickered and shone,

Into the sun for an instant, and in an instant
gone?

Was it a warrior's plume, a warrior's girdle of
hair?

Swung in the loop of a rope, is he making a
bridge of the air?”

Once and again Rua saw, in the trenchant
edge of the sky,

The giddy conjuring done. And then, in the
blink of an eye,
A scream caught in with the breath, a whirling
packet of limbs,
A lump that dived in the gulph, more swift
than a dolphin swims;
And there was the lump at his feet, and eyes
were alive in the lump.
Sick was the soul of Rua, ambushed close in
a clump; 320
Sick of soul he drew near, making his courage
stout;
And he looked in the face of the thing, and
the life of the thing went out.
And he gazed on the tattooed limbs, and,
behold, he knew the man:
Hoka, a chief of the Vais, the truculent foe of
his clan:
Hoka a moment since that stepped in the loop
of the rope,
Filled with the lust of war, and alive with
courage and hope.

Again to the giddy cornice Rua lifted his eyes,

And again beheld men passing in the arm-pit
of the skies.

“Foes of my race!” cried Rua, “the mouth of
Rua is true:

Never a shark in the deep is nobler of soul
than you. 330

There was never a nobler foray, never a bolder
plan;

Never a dizzier path was trod by the children
of man;

And Rua, your evil-dealer through all the days
of his years,

Counts it honour to hate you, honour to fall
by your spears.”

And Rua straightened his back. “O Vais, a
scheme for a scheme!”

Cried Rua and turned and descended the tur-
bulent stair of the stream,

Leaping from rock to rock as the water-wagtail
at home

Flits through resonant valleys and skims by
boulder and foam.

And Rua burst from the glen and leaped on
the shore of the brook,

And straight for the roofs of the clan his vig-
orous way he took. 34°

Swift were the heels of his flight, and loud
behind as he went

Rattled the leaping stones on the line of his
long descent.

And ever he thought as he ran, and caught at
his gasping breath,

“O the fool of a Rua, Rua that runs to his
death!

But the right is the right,” thought Rua, and
ran like the wind on the foam,

“The right is the right for ever, and home for
ever home.

For what though the oven smoke? And what
though I die ere morn?

There was I nourished and tended, and there
was Taheia born.”

Noon was high on the High-place, the second
noon of the feast;

And heat and shameful slumber weighed on
people and priest; 35°

And the heart drudged slow in bodies heavy
with monstrous meals;
And the senseless limbs were scattered abroad
like spokes of wheels;
And crapulous women sat and stared at the
stones anigh
With a bestial droop of the lip and a swinish
rheum in the eye.
As about the dome of the bees in the time for
the drones to fall,
The dead and the maimed are scattered, and
lie, and stagger, and crawl;
So on the grades of the terrace, in the ardent
eye of the day,
The half-awake and the sleepers clustered and
crawled and lay;
And loud as the dome of the bees, in the time
of a swarming horde,
A horror of many insects hung in the air and
roared.

360

Rua looked and wondered; he said to himself
in his heart:

“Poor are the pleasures of life, and death is
the better part.”

But lo! on the higher benches a cluster of
tranquil folk

Sat by themselves, nor raised their serious eyes,
nor spoke:

Women with robes unruffled and garlands duly
arranged,

Gazing far from the feast with faces of people
estranged;

And quiet amongst the quiet, and fairer than
all the fair,

Taheia, the well-descended, Taheia, heavy of
hair.

And the soul of Rua awoke, courage en-
lightened his eyes,

And he uttered a summoning shout and called
on the clan to rise.

370

Over against him at once, in the spotted shade
of the trees,

Owlsh and blinking creatures scrambled to
hands and knees:

On the grades of the sacred terrace, the driver-
ler woke to fear,
And the hand of the ham-drooped warrior
brandished a wavering spear.
And Rua folded his arms, and scorn discovered
his teeth;
Above the war-crowd gibbered, and Rua stood
smiling beneath.
Thick, like leaves in the autumn, faint, like
April sleet,
Missiles from tremulous hands quivered around
his feet;
And Taheia leaped from her place; and the
priest, the ruby-eyed,
Ran to the front of the terrace, and brandished
his arms, and cried: 380
“Hold, O fools, he brings tidings!” and “Hold,
't is the love of my heart!”
Till lo! in front of the terrace, Rua pierced
with a dart.

Taheia cherished his head, and the aged priest
stood by,

And gazed with eyes of ruby at Rua's darkening
eye.

"Taheia, here is the end, I die a death for a
man.

I have given the life of my soul to save an
unsavable clan.

See them, the drooping of hams! behold me
the blinking crew:

Fifty spears they cast, and one of fifty true!
And you, O priest, the foreteller, foretell for
yourself if you can,

Foretell the hour of the day when the Vais shall
burst on your clan!

390

By the head of the tapu cleft, with death and
fire in their hand,

Thick and silent like ants, the warriors swarm
in the land."

And they tell that when next the sun had
climbed to the noonday skies,
It shone on the smoke of feasting in the country
of the Vais.

NOTES TO THE FEAST OF FAMINE.

In this ballad I have strung together some of the more striking particularities of the Marquesas. It rests upon no authority; it is in no sense, like "*Rahéro*," a native story; but a patchwork of details of manners and the impressions of a traveller. It may seem strange, when the scene is laid upon these profligate islands, to make the story hinge on love. But love is not less known in the Marquesas than elsewhere; nor is there any cause of suicide more common in the islands.

Note 1, verse 2. "*Pit of popoi*." Where the bread-fruit was stored for preservation.

Note 2, verse 15. "*Ruby-red*." The priest's eyes were probably red from the abuse of Rava. His beard (verse 18) is said to be worth an estate; for the beards of old men are the favourite head adornment of the Marquesans, as the hair of women formed their most costly girdle. The former, among this generally beardless and short-lived people, fetch to-day considerable sums.

Note 3, verse 20. "*Tikis*." The tiki is an ugly image hewn out of wood or stone.

Note 4, verse 72. "*The one-stringed harp*." Usually employed for serenades.

Note 5, verse 105. "*The sacred cabin of palm*." Which, however, no woman could approach. I do not know where women were tattooed; probably in the com-

mon house, or in the bush, for a woman was a creature of small account. I must guard the reader against supposing Taheia was at all disfigured; the art of the Marquesan tattooer is extreme; and she would appear to be clothed in a web of lace, inimitably delicate, exquisite in pattern, and of a bluish hue that at once contrasts and harmonizes with the warm pigment of the native skin. It would be hard to find a woman more becomingly adorned than "a well-tattooed" Marquesan.

Note 6, verse 149. "*The horror of night.*" The Polynesian fear of ghosts and of the dark has been already referred to. Their life is beleaguered by the dead.

Note 7, verse 165. "*The quiet passage of souls.*" So, I am told, the natives explain the sound of a little wind passing overhead unfelt.

Note 8, verse 202. "*The first of the victims fell.*" Without doubt, this whole scene is untrue to fact. The victims were disposed of privately and some time before. And indeed I am far from claiming the credit of any high degree of accuracy for this ballad. Even in a time of famine, it is probable that Marquesan life went far more gaily than is here represented. But the melancholy of to-day lies on the writer's mind.

TICONDEROGA.

TICONDEROGA: A LEGEND OF THE WEST HIGHLANDS.

THIS is the tale of the man
Who heard a word in the night
In the land of the heathery hills,
In the days of the feud and the fight.
By the sides of the rainy sea,
Where never a stranger came,
On the awful lips of the dead,
He heard the outlandish name.
It sang in his sleeping ears,
It hummed in his waking head: 10
The name — Ticonderoga,
The utterance of the dead.

I. THE SAYING OF THE NAME.

On the loch-sides of Appin,
When the mist blew from the sea,
A Stewart stood with a Cameron:
An angry man was he.

The blood beat in his ears,

The blood ran hot to his head,

The mist blew from the sea,

And there was the Cameron dead. 20

“O, what have I done to my friend,

O, what have I done to myself,

That he should be cold and dead,

And I in the danger of all?

Nothing but danger about me,

Danger behind and before,

Death at wait in the heather

In Appin and Mamore,

Hate at all of the ferries

And death at each of the fords, 30

Camerons priming gunlocks

And Camerons sharpening swords.”

But this was a man of counsel,

This was a man of a score,

There dwelt no pawkier Stewart

In Appin or Mamore.

He looked on the blowing mist,

He looked on the awful dead,

And there came a smile on his face 39

And there slipped a thought in his head.

Out over cairn and moss,

Out over scrog and scaur,

He ran as runs the clansman

That bears the cross of war.

His heart beat in his body,

His hair clove to his face,

When he came at last in the gloaming

To the dead man's brother's place.

The east was white with the moon,

The west with the sun was red, 50

And there, in the house-doorway,

Stood the brother of the dead.

"I have slain a man to my danger,

I have slain a man to my death.

I put my soul in your hands,"

The panting Stewart saith.

"I lay it bare in your hands,

For I know your hands are leal;

And be you my targe and bulwark

From the bullet and the steel." 60

Then up and spoke the Cameron,
And gave him his hand again:
"There shall never a man in Scotland
Set faith in me in vain;
And whatever man you have slaughtered,
Of whatever name or line,
By my sword and yonder mountain,
I make your quarrel mine.¹
I bid you in to my fireside,
I share with you house and hall; 70
It stands upon my honour
To see you safe from all."

It fell in the time of midnight,
When the fox barked in the den
And the plaids were over the faces
In all the houses of men,
That as the living Cameron
Lay sleepless on his bed,
Out of the night and the other world,
Came in to him the dead. 80

"My blood is on the heather,
My bones are on the hill;

There is joy in the home of ravens
That the young shall eat their fill.
My blood is poured in the dust,
My soul is spilled in the air;
And the man that has undone me
Sleeps in my brother's care."

"I'm wae for your death, my brother,
But if all of my house were dead, 90
I couldnae withdraw the plighted hand,
Nor break the word once said."

"O, what shall I say to our father,
In the place to which I fare?
O, what shall I say to our mother,
Who greets to see me there?
And to all the kindly Camerons
That have lived and died long-syne —
Is this the word you send them,
Fause-hearted brother mine?" 100

"It's neither fear nor duty,
It's neither quick nor dead
Shall gar me withdraw the plighted hand,
Or break the word once said."

Thrice in the time of midnight,
When the fox barked in the den,
And the plaids were over the faces
In all the houses of men,
Thrice as the living Cameron
Lay sleepless on his bed,
Out of the night and the other world
Came in to him the dead,
And cried to him for vengeance
On the man that laid him low;
And thrice the living Cameron
Told the dead Cameron, no.

110

“Thrice have you seen me, brother,
But now shall see me no more,
Till you meet your angry fathers
Upon the farther shore.

120

Thrice have I spoken, and now,
Before the cock be heard,
I take my leave for ever
With the naming of a word.
It shall sing in your sleeping ears,
It shall hum in your waking head,

The name — Ticonderoga,
And the warning of the dead."

Now when the night was over
And the time of people's fears, 130
The Cameron walked abroad,
And the word was in his ears.
"Many a name I know,
But never a name like this;
O, where shall I find a skilful man
Shall tell me what it is?"
With many a man he counselled
Of high and low degree,
With the herdsmen on the mountains
And the fishers of the sea. 140
And he came and went unweary,
And read the books of yore,
And the runes that were written of old
On stones upon the moor.
And many a name he was told,
But never the name of his fears —
Never, in east or west,
The name that rang in his ears:

Names of men and of clans,
Names for the grass and the tree, 150
For the smallest tarn in the mountains,
The smallest reef in the sea:
Names for the high and low,
The names of the craig and the flat;
But in all the land of Scotland,
Never a name like that.

II. THE SEEKING OF THE NAME.

And now there was speech in the south,
And a man of the south that was wise,
A periwig'd lord of London,²
Called on the clans to rise. 160
And the riders rode, and the summons
Came to the western shore,
To the land of the sea and the heather,
To Appin and Mamore.
It called on all to gather
From every scrog and scaur,
That loved their fathers' tartan
And the ancient game of war.

And down the watery valley
And up the windy hill,
Once more, as in the olden,
The pipes were sounding shrill;
Again in highland sunshine
The naked steel was bright;
And the lads, once more in tartan,
Went forth again to fight.

“O, why should I dwell here
With a weird upon my life,
When the clansmen shout for battle
And the war-swords clash in strife? 180
I cannae joy at feast,
I cannae sleep in bed,
For the wonder of the word
And the warning of the dead.
It sings in my sleeping ears,
It hums in my waking head,
The name — Ticonderoga,
The utterance of the dead.
Then up, and with the fighting men
To march away from here, 190

Till the cry of the great war-pipe
Shall drown it in my ear!"

Where flew King George's ensign
The plaided soldiers went:
They drew the sword in Germany,
In Flanders pitched the tent.
The bells of foreign cities
Rang far across the plain:
They passed the happy Rhine,
They drank the rapid Main.

200

Through Asiatic jungles
The Tartans filed their way,
And the neighing of the war-pipes
Struck terror in Cathay.³
"Many a name have I heard," he thought,
"In all the tongues of men,
Full many a name both here and there,
Full many both now and then.
When I was at home in my father's house
In the land of the naked knee,
Between the eagles that fly in the lift
And the herrings that swim in the sea,

210

And now that I am a captain-man
With a braw cockade in my hat —
Many a name have I heard," he thought,
"But never a name like that."

III. THE PLACE OF THE NAME.

There fell a war in a woody place,
Lay far across the sea,
A war of the march in the mirk midnight
And the shot from behind the tree, 220
The shaven head and the painted face,
The silent foot in the wood,
In a land of a strange, outlandish tongue
That was hard to be understood.

It fell about the gloaming
The general stood with his staff,
He stood and he looked east and west
With little mind to laugh.
"Far have I been and much have I seen,
And kent both gain and loss, 230
But here we have woods on every hand
And a kittle water to cross.

Far have I been and much have I seen,
But never the beat of this;
And there 's one must go down to that waterside
To see how deep it is."

It fell in the dusk of the night
When unco things betide,
The skilly captain, the Cameron,
Went down to that waterside. 240
Canny and soft the captain went;
And a man of the woody land,
With the shaven head and the painted face,
Went down at his right hand.
It fell in the quiet night,
There was never a sound to ken;
But all of the woods to the right and the left
Lay filled with the painted men.

"Far have I been and much have I seen,
Both as a man and boy, 250
But never have I set forth a foot
On so perilous an employ."
It fell in the dusk of the night
When unco things betide,

That he was aware of a captain-man
Drew near to the waterside.
He was aware of his coming
Down in the gloaming alone;
And he looked in the face of the man
And lo! the face was his own. 260

"This is my weird," he said,
"And now I ken the worst;
For many shall fall the morn,
But I shall fall with the first.
O, you of the outland tongue,
You of the painted face,
This is the place of my death;
Can you tell me the name of the place?"

"Since the Frenchmen have been here
They have called it Sault-Marie; 270
But that is a name for priests,
And not for you and me.
It went by another word,"
Quoth he of the shaven head:
"It was called Ticonderoga
In the days of the great dead."

And it fell on the morrow's morning,
In the fiercest of the fight,
That the Cameron bit the dust
As he foretold at night;
And far from the hills of heather,
Far from the isles of the sea,
He sleeps in the place of the name
As it was doomed to be.

280

NOTES TO TICONDEROGA.

INTRODUCTION.—I first heard this legend of my own country from that friend of men of letters, Mr. Alfred Nutt, “there in roaring London’s central stream”; and since the ballad first saw the light of day in *Scribner’s Magazine*, Mr. Nutt and Lord Archibald Campbell have been in public controversy on the facts. Two clans, the Camerons and the Campbells, lay claim to this bracing story; and they do well: the man who preferred his plighted troth to the commands and menaces of the dead is an ancestor worth disputing. But the Campbells must rest content: they have the broad lands and the broad page of history; this appanage must be denied them; for between the name of *Cameron* and that of *Campbell*, the muse will never hesitate.

Note 1, verse 68. Mr. Nutt reminds me it was “by my sword and Ben Cruachan” the Cameron swore.

Note 2, verse 159. “*A periwig’d lord of London.*” The first Pitt.

Note 3, verse 204. “*Cathay.*” There must be some omission in General Stewart’s charming “History of the Highland Regiments,” a book that might well be republished and continued; or it scarce appears how our friend could have got to China.



HEATHER ALE.

HEATHER ALE: A GALLOWAY LEGEND.

FROM the bonny bells of heather
They brewed a drink long-syne,
Was sweeter far than honey,
Was stronger far than wine.
They brewed it and they drank it,
And lay in a blessed swoond
For days and days together
In their dwellings underground.

There rose a king in Scotland,
A fell man to his foes,
He smote the Picts in battle,
He hunted them like roes.
Over miles of the red mountain
He hunted as they fled,
And strewed the dwarfish bodies
Of the dying and the dead.

10

Summer came in the country,
Red was the heather bell;
But the manner of the brewing
Was none alive to tell. 20
In graves that were like children's
On many a mountain head,
The Brewsters of the Heather
Lay numbered with the dead.

The king in the red moorland
Rode on a summer's day;
And the bees hummed, and the curlews
Cried beside the way.
The king rode, and was angry,
Black was his brow and pale, 30
To rule in a land of heather
And lack the Heather Ale.

It fortune'd that his vassals,
Riding free on the heath,
Came on a stone that was fallen
And vermin hid beneath.
Rudely plucked from their hiding,
Never a word they spoke:

A son and his aged father —

Last of the dwarfish folk.

40

The king sat high on his charger,

He looked on the little men;

And the dwarfish and swarthy couple

Looked at the king again.

Down by the shore he had them;

And there on the giddy brink —

“I will give you life, ye vermin,

For the secret of the drink.”

There stood the son and father

And they looked high and low;

50

The heather was red around them,

The sea rumbled below.

And up and spoke the father,

Shrill was his voice to hear:

“I have a word in private,

A word for the royal ear.

“Life is dear to the aged,

And honour a little thing;

I would gladly sell the secret,”

Quoth the Pict to the King.

60

His voice was small as a sparrow's,
And shrill and wonderful clear:
"I would gladly sell my secret,
Only my son I fear.

"For life is a little matter,
And death is naught to the young;
And I dare not sell my honour
Under the eye of my son.
Take *him*, O king, and bind him,
And cast him far in the deep; 70
And it's I will tell the secret
That I have sworn to keep."

They took the son and bound him,
Neck and heels in a thong,
And a lad took him and swung him,
And flung him far and strong,
And the sea swallowed his body,
Like that of a child of ten;—
And there on the cliff stood the father,
Last of the dwarfish men. 80

"True was the word I told you:
Only my son I feared;

For I doubt the sapling courage
That goes without the beard.
But now in vain is the torture,
Fire shall never avail:
Here dies in my bosom
The secret of Heather Ale."

NOTE TO HEATHER ALE.

Among the curiosities of human nature, this legend claims a high place. It is needless to remind the reader that the Picts were never exterminated, and form to this day a large proportion of the folk of Scotland: occupying the eastern and the central parts, from the Firth of Forth, or perhaps the Lammermoors, upon the south, to the Ord of Caithness on the north. That the blundering guess of a dull chronicler should have inspired men with imaginary loathing for their own ancestors is already strange: that it should have begotten this wild legend seems incredible. Is it possible the chronicler's error was merely nominal? that what he told, and what the people proved themselves so ready to receive, about the Picts, was true or partly true of some anterior and perhaps Lappish savages, small of stature, black of hue, dwelling underground — possibly also the distillers of some forgotten spirit? See Mr. Campbell's *Tales of the West Highlands*.

CHRISTMAS AT SEA.

CHRISTMAS AT SEA.

THE sheets were frozen hard, and they cut the
naked hand;

The decks were like á slide, where a seaman
scarce could stand;

The wind was a nor'wester, blowing squally off
the sea;

And cliffs and spouting breakers were the only
things a-lee.

They heard the surf a-roaring before the break
of day;

But 't was only with the peep of light we saw
how ill we lay.

We tumbled every hand on deck instanter, with
a shout,

And we gave her the maintops'l, and stood by
to go about.

All day we tacked and tacked between the
South Head and the North;

All day we hauled the frozen sheets, and got no
further forth; 10

All day as cold as charity, in bitter pain and
dread,

For very life and nature we tacked from head
to head.

We gave the South a wider berth, for there the
tide-race roared;

But every tack we made we brought the North
Head close aboard:

So 's we saw cliffs and houses, and the breakers
running high,

And the coastguard in his garden, with his
glass against his eye.

The frost was on the village roofs as white as
ocean foam;

The good red fires were burning bright in every
'longshore home;

The windows sparkled clear, and the chimneys
volleyed out;

And I vow we sniffed the victuals as the vessel
went about.

The bells upon the church were rung with a
mighty jovial cheer;

For it's just that I should tell you how (of all
days in the year)

This day of our adversity was blessed Christ-
mas morn,

And the house above the coastguard's was the
house where I was born.

O well I saw the pleasant room, the pleasant
faces there,

My mother's silver spectacles, my father's silver
hair;

And well I saw the firelight, like a flight of
homely elves,

Go dancing round the china-plates that stand
upon the shelves.

And well I knew the talk they had, the talk
that was of me,

Of the shadow on the household and the son
that went to sea;

And O the wicked fool I seemed, in every kind
of way,

To be here and hauling frozen ropes on blessed
Christmas Day.

They lit the high sea-light, and the dark began
to fall.

"All hands to loose topgallant sails," I heard
the captain call.

"By the Lord, she'll never stand it," our first
mate, Jackson, cried.

. . . "It's the one way or the other, Mr.
Jackson," he replied.

She staggered to her bearings, but the sails
were new and good,

And the ship smelt up to windward just as
though she understood.

As the winter's day was ending, in the entry
of the night,

We cleared the weary headland, and passed
below the light.

And they heaved a mighty breath, every soul
on board but me,

As they saw her nose again pointing handsome
out to sea;

But all that I could think of, in the darkness
and the cold,

Was just that I was leaving home and my folks
were growing old.

UNDERWOODS.

DEDICATION.

THERE are men and classes of men that stand above the common herd: the soldier, the sailor, and the shepherd not infrequently; the artist rarely; rarelier still, the clergyman; the physician almost as a rule. He is the flower (such as it is) of our civilization; and when that stage of man is done with, and only remembered to be marvelled at in history, he will be thought to have shared as little as any in the defects of the period, and most notably exhibited the virtues of the race. Generosity he has, such as is possible to those who practise an art, never to those who drive a trade; discretion, tested by a hundred secrets; tact, tried in a thousand embarrassments; and what are more important, Heraclean cheerfulness and courage. So it is that he brings air and cheer into the sickroom, and often enough, though not so often as he wishes, brings healing.

Gratitude is but a lame sentiment; thanks, when they are expressed, are often more embarrassing than welcome; and yet I must set forth mine to a few out of many doctors who have brought me comfort and help: to Dr. Willey of San Francisco, whose kindness to a stranger it must be as grateful to him, as it is touching to me, to remember; to Dr. Karl Ruedi of Davos, the good genius of the English in his frosty mountains; to Dr. Herbert of Paris, whom I knew only for a week; and to Dr. Caissot of Montpellier, whom I knew only for ten days, and who have yet written their names deeply in my memory; to Dr. Brandt of Royat; to Dr. Wakefield of Nice; to Dr. Chepmell, whose visits make it a pleasure to be ill; to Dr. Horace Dobell, so wise in counsel; to Sir Andrew Clark, so unwearied in kindness; and to that wise youth, my uncle, Dr. Balfour.

I forget as many as I remember; and I ask both to pardon me, these for silence, those for inadequate speech. But one name I have kept on purpose to the last, because it is a household word with me, and because if I had not

received favours from so many hands and in so many quarters of the world, it should have stood upon this page alone: that of my friend Thomas Bodley Scott of Bournemouth. Will he accept this, although shared among so many, for a dedication to himself? and when next my ill-fortune (which has thus its pleasant side) brings him hurrying to me when he would fain sit down to meat or lie down to rest, will he care to remember that he takes this trouble for one who is not fool enough to be ungrateful?

R. L. S.

SKERRYVORE,

BOURNEMOUTH.

NOTE.

THE human conscience has fled of late the troublesome domain of conduct for what I should have supposed to be the less congenial field of art: there she may now be said to rage, and with special severity in all that touches dialect; so that in every novel the letters of the alphabet are tortured, and the reader wearied, to commemorate shades of mispronunciation. Now, spelling is an art of great difficulty in my eyes, and I am inclined to lean upon the printer, even in common practice, rather than to venture abroad upon new quests. And the Scots tongue has an orthography of its own, lacking neither "authority nor author." Yet the temptation is great to lend a little guidance to the bewildered Englishman. Some simple phonetic artifice might defend your verses from barbarous mishandling, and yet not injure any vested interest. So it

seems at first; but there are rocks ahead. Thus, if I wish the diphthong *ou* to have its proper value, I may write *oor* instead of *our*; many have done so and lived, and the pillars of the universe remained unshaken. But if I did so, and came presently to *down*, which is the classical Scots spelling of the English *down*, I should begin to feel uneasy; and if I went on a little further, and came to a classical Scots word, like *stour* or *dour* or *clour*, I should know precisely where I was — that is to say, that I was out of sight of land on those high seas of spelling reform in which so many strong swimmers have toiled vainly. To some the situation is exhilarating; as for me, I give one bubbling cry and sink. The compromise at which I have arrived is indefensible, and I have no thought of trying to defend it. As I have stuck for the most part to the proper spelling, I append a table of some common vowel sounds which no one need consult; and just to prove that I belong to my age and have in me the stuff of a reformer, I have used modification marks throughout. Thus I can tell myself,

not without pride, that I have added a fresh stumbling-block for English readers, and to a page of print in my native tongue have lent a new uncouthness. *Sed non nobis.*

I note again, that among our new dialecticians, the local habitat of every dialect is given to the square mile. I could not emulate this nicety if I desired; for I simply wrote my Scots as well as I was able, not caring if it hailed from Lauderdale or Angus, from the Mearns or Galloway; if I had ever heard a good word, I used it without shame; and when Scots was lacking, or the rhyme jibbed, I was glad (like my betters) to fall back on English. For all that, I own to a friendly feeling for the tongue of Fergusson and of Sir Walter, both Edinburgh men; and I confess that Burns has always sounded in my ear like something partly foreign. And indeed I am from the Lothians myself; it is there I heard the language spoken about my childhood; and it is in the drawling Lothian voice that I repeat it to myself. Let the precisians call my speech that of the Lothians. And if it be not pure, alas! what

matters it? The day draws near when this illustrious and malleable tongue shall be quite forgotten; and Burns's Ayrshire, and Dr. Macdonald's Aberdeen-awa', and Scott's brave, metropolitan utterance will be all equally the ghosts of speech. Till then I would love to have my hour as a native Maker, and be read by my own countryfolk in our own dying language: an ambition surely rather of the heart than of the head, so restricted as it is in prospect of endurance, so parochial in bounds of space.

BOOK I.—IN ENGLISH.

I.

ENVOY.

Go, little book, and wish to all
Flowers in the garden, meat in the hall,
A bin of wine, a spice of wit,
A house with lawns enclosing it,
A living river by the door,
A nightingale in the sycamore!

II.

A SONG OF THE ROAD.

THE gauger walked with willing foot,
And aye the gauger played the flute;
And what should Master Gauger play
But *Over the hills and far away?*

Whene'er I buckle on my pack
And foot it gayly in the track,
O pleasant gauger, long since dead,
I hear you fluting on ahead.

You go with me the self-same way —
The self-same air for me you play;
For I do think and so do you
It is the tune to travel to.

For who would gravely set his face
To go to this or t' other place?

There 's nothing under heav'n so blue
That 's fairly worth the travelling to.

On every hand the roads begin,
And people walk with zeal therein;
But wheresoe'er the highways tend,
Be sure there 's nothing at the end.

Then follow you, wherever hie
The travelling mountains of the sky.
Or let the streams in civil mode
Direct your choice upon a road;

For one and all, or high or low,
Will lead you where you wish to go;
And one and all go night and day
Over the hills and far away!

Forest of Montargis, 1878.

III.

THE CANOE SPEAKS.

ON the great streams the ships may go
About men's business to and fro.
But I, the egg-shell pinnace, sleep
On crystal waters ankle-deep:
I, whose diminutive design,
Of sweeter cedar, pithier pine,
Is fashioned on so frail a mould,
A hand may launch, a hand withhold:
I, rather, with the leaping trout
Wind, among lilies, in and out;
I, the unnamed, inviolate,
Green, rustic rivers navigate;
My dipping paddle scarcely shakes
The berry in the bramble-brakes;
Still forth on my green way I wend
Beside the cottage garden-end;
And by the nested angler fare,
And take the lovers unaware.

By willow wood and water-wheel
Speedily fleets my touching keel;
By all retired and shady spots
Where prosper dim forget-me-nots;
By meadows where at afternoon
The growing maidens troop in June
To loose their girdles on the grass.
Ah! speedier than before the glass
The backward toilet goes; and swift
As swallows quiver, robe, and shift
And the rough country stockings lie
Around each young divinity.
When, following the recondite brook,
Sudden upon this scene I look,
And light with unfamiliar face
On chaste Diana's bathing-place,
Loud ring the hills about and all
The shallows are abandoned. . . .

IV

It is the season now to go
About the country high and low,
Among the lilacs hand in hand,
And two by two in fairy land.

The brooding boy, the sighing maid,
Wholly fain and half afraid,
Now meet along the hazel'd brook
To pass and linger, pause and look.

A year ago, and blithely paired,
Their rough-and-tumble play they shared;
They kissed and quarrelled, laughed and cried,
A year ago at Eastertide.

With bursting heart, with fiery face,
She strove against him in the race;
He, unabashed, her garter saw,
'That now would touch her skirts with awe.

Now by the stile ablaze she stops,
And his demurer eyes he drops;
Now they exchange averted sighs
Or stand and marry silent eyes.

And he to her a hero is,
And sweeter she than primroses;
Their common silence dearer far
Than nightingale and mavis are.

Now when they sever wedded hands,
Joy trembles in their bosom-strands,
And lovely laughter leaps and falls
Upon their lips in madrigals.

V.

THE HOUSE BEAUTIFUL

*A naked house, a naked moor,
A shivering pool before the door,
A garden bare of flowers and fruit,
And poplars at the garden foot:
Such is the place that I live in,
Bleak without and bare within.*

Yet shall your ragged moor receive
The incomparable pomp of eve,
And the cold glories of the dawn
Behind your shivering trees be drawn;
And when the wind from place to place
Doth the unmoored cloud-galleons chase,
Your garden gloom and gleam again,
With leaping sun, with glancing rain.
Here shall the wizard moon ascend
The heavens, in the crimson end

Of day's declining splendour; here
The army of the stars appear.
The neighbour hollows dry or wet,
Spring shall with tender flowers beset;
And oft the morning muser see
Larks rising from the broomy lea,
And every fairy wheel and thread
Of cobweb dew-bediamonded.
When daisies go, shall winter time
Silver the simple grass with rime;
Autumnal frosts enchant the pool
And make the cart-ruts beautiful;
And when snow-bright the moor expands
How shall your children clap their hands!
To make this earth our hermitage,
A cheerful and a changeful page,
God's bright and intricate device
Of days and seasons doth suffice.

VI.

A VISIT FROM THE SEA.

FAR from the loud sea beaches
Where he goes fishing and crying,
Here in the inland garden
Why is the sea-gull flying?

Here are no fish to dive for;
Here is the corn and lea;
Here are the green trees rustling.
Hie away home to sea!

Fresh is the river water
And quiet among the rushes;
This is no home for the sea-gull
But for the rooks and thrushes.

Pity the bird that has wandered!
Pity the sailor ashore!

Hurry him home to the ocean,
Let him come here no more.

High on the sea-cliff ledges
The white gulls are trooping and crying,
Here among rooks and roses,
Why is the sea-gull flying?

VII.

TO A GARDENER.

FRIEND, in my mountain-side demesne,
My plain-beholding, rosy, green
And linnet-haunted garden-ground,
Let still the esculents abound.
Let first the onion flourish there,
Rose among roots, the maiden-fair,
Wine-scented and poetic soul
Of the capacious salad bowl.
Let thyme the mountaineer (to dress
The tinier birds) and wading cress,
The lover of the shallow brook,
From all my plots and borders look.
Nor crisp and ruddy radish, nor
Pease-cods for the child's pinafore
Be lacking; nor of salad clan
The last and least that ever ran
About great nature's garden-beds.
Nor thence be missed the speary heads

Of artichoke; nor thence the bean
That, gathered innocent and green,
Outsavours the belauded pea.

These tend, I prithee; and for me,
Thy most long-suffering master, bring
In April, when the linnets sing
And the days lengthen more and more
At sundown to the garden door.
And I, being provided thus,
Shall, with superb asparagus,
A book, a taper, and a cup
Of country wine, divinely sup.

La Solitude, Hyères.

VIII.

TO MINNIE.

(With a Hand-Glass.)

A PICTURE-FRAME for you to fill,
A paltry setting for your face,
A thing that has no worth until
You lend it something of your grace,

I send (unhappy I that sing
Laid by a while upon the shelf)
Because I would not send a thing
Less charming than you are yourself.

And happier than I, alas!
(Dumb thing, I envy its delight),
'Twill wish you well, the looking-glass,
And look you in the face to-night.

1869.

IX.

TO K. DE M.

A LOVER of the moorland bare
And honest country winds, you were;
The silver-skimming rain you took;
And loved the floodings of the brook,
Dew, frost, and mountains, fire and seas,
Tumultuary silences,
Winds that in darkness fied a tune,
And the high-riding, virgin moon.

And as the berry, pale and sharp,
Springs on some ditch's counterscarp
In our ungenial, native north —
You put your frosted wildings forth,
And on the heath, afar from man,
A strong and bitter virgin ran.

The berry ripened keeps the rude
And racy flavour of the wood;

And you that loved the empty plain
All redolent of wind and rain,
Around you still the curlew sings —
The freshness of the weather clings —
The maiden jewels of the rain
Sit in your dabbled locks again.

X.

TO N. V. DE G. S.

THE unfathomable sea, and time, and tears,
The deeds of heroes and the crimes of kings
Dispart us; and the river of events
Has, for an age of years, to east and west
More widely borne our cradles. Thou to me
Art foreign, as when seamen at the dawn
Descry a land far off and know not which.
So I approach uncertain; so I cruise
Round thy mysterious islet, and behold
Surf and great mountains and loud river-bars,
And from the shore hear inland voices call.
Strange is the seaman's heart; he hopes, he
fears;

Draws closer and sweeps wider from that coast;
Last, his rent sail refits, and to the deep
His shattered prow uncomforted puts back.
Yet as he goes he ponders at the helm
Of that bright island; where he feared to touch,

His spirit re-adventures; and for years,
Where by his wife he slumbers safe at home,
Thoughts of that land revisit him; he sees
The eternal mountains beckon, and awakes
Yearning for that far home that might have
 been.

XI.

TO WILL. H. LOW.

YOUTH now flees on feathered foot
Faint and fainter sounds the flute,
Rarer songs of gods; and still
Somewhere on the sunny hill,
Or along the winding stream,
Through the willows, flits a dream;
Flits, but shows a smiling face,
Flees, but with so quaint a grace,
None can choose to stay at home,
All must follow, all must roam.
This is unborn beauty: she
Now in air floats high and free,
Takes the sun and breaks the blue;—
Late with stooping pinion flew
Raking hedgerow trees, and wet
Her wing in silver streams, and set
Shining foot on temple roof:
Now again she flies aloof,

Coasting mountain clouds and kiss't
By the evening's amethyst.

In wet wood and miry lane,
Still we pant and pound in vain;
Still with leaden foot we chase
Waning pinion, fainting face;
Still with gray hair we stumble on,
Till, behold, the vision gone!
Where hath fleeting beauty led?
To the doorway of the dead.
Life is over, life was gay:
We have come the primrose way.

XII.

TO MRS. WILL. H. LOW.

EVEN in the bluest noonday of July,
There could not run the smallest breath of
wind

But all the quarter sounded like a wood;
And in the checkered silence and above
The hum of city cabs that sought the Bois,
Suburban ashes shivered into song.

A patter and a chatter and a chirp
And a long-dying hiss — it was as though
Starched old brocaded dames through all the
house

Had trailed a strident skirt, or the whole sky
Even in a wink had over-brimmed in rain.
Hark, in these shady parlours, how it talks
Of the near autumn, how the smitten ash
Trembles and augurs floods! O not too long
In these inconstant latitudes delay,

O not too late from the unbeloved north
Trim your escape! For soon shall this low
roof

Resound indeed with rain, soon shall your
eyes

Search the foul garden, search the darkened
rooms,

Nor find one jewel but the blazing log.

12 Rue Vernier, Paris.

XIII.

TO H. F. BROWN.

(Written during a Dangerous Sickness.)

I sit and wait a pair of oars
On cis-Elysian river-shores.
Where the immortal dead have sate,
'Tis mine to sit and meditate;
To re-ascend life's rivulet,
Without remorse, without regret;
And sing my *Alma Genetrix*
Among the willows of the Styx.

And lo, as my serener soul
Did these unhappy shores patrol,
And wait with an attentive ear
The coming of the gondolier,
Your fire-surviving roll I took,
Your spirited and happy book;*

* "Life on the Lagoons," by H. F. Brown, originally burned in the fire at Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.'s.

Whereon, despite my frowning fate,
It did my soul so recreate
That all my fancies fled away
On a Venetian holiday.

Now, thanks to your triumphant care,
Your pages clear as April air,
The sails, the bells, the birds, I know,
And the far-off Friulan snow;
The land and sea, the sun and shade,
And the blue even, lamp-inlaid,
For this, for these, for all, O friend,
For your whole book from end to end —
For Paron Piero's muttonham —
I your defaulting debtor am.

Perchance, reviving, yet may I
To your sea-paven city hie,
And in a *felze*, some day yet
Light at your pipe my cigarette.

XIV.

TO ANDREW LANG.

DEAR Andrew, with the brindled hair,
Who glory to have thrown in air,
High over arm, the trembling reed,
By Ale and Kail, by Till and Tweed;
An equal craft of hand you show
The pen to guide, the fly to throw:
I count you happy starred; for God,
When He with inkpot and with rod
Endowed you, bade your fortune lead
Forever by the crooks of Tweed,
Forever by the woods of song
And lands that to the Muse belong;
Or if in peopled streets, or in
The abhorred pedantic sanhedrim,
It should be yours to wander, still
Airs of the morn, airs of the hill,
The plovery Forest and the seas
That break about the Hebrides,

Should follow over field and plain
And find you at the window-pane;
And you again see hill and peel,
And the bright springs gush at your heel.
So went the fiat forth, and so
Garrulous like a brook you go,
With sound of happy mirth and sheen
Of daylight—whether by the green
You fare that moment, or the gray;
Whether you dwell in March or May;
Or whether treat of reels and rods
Or of the old unhappy gods:
Still like a brook your page has shone,
And your ink sings of Helicon.

XV.

ET TU IN ARCADIA VIXISTI.

(TO R. A. M. S.)

IN ancient tales, O friend, thy spirit dwelt;
There, from of old, thy childhood passed; and
there

High expectation, high delights and deeds,
Thy fluttering heart with hope and terror
moved.

And thou hast heard of yore the Blatant Beast,
And Roland's horn, and that war-scattering
shout

Of all-unarmed Achilles, ægis-crowned.

And perilous lands thou sawest, sounding
shores

And seas and forests drear, island and dale
And mountain dark. For thou with Tristram
rod'st

Or Bedevere, in farthest Lyonesse

Thou hadst a booth in Samarcand, whereat
Side-looking Magians trafficked; thence, by
night,

An Afreet snatched thee, and with wings upbore
Beyond the Aral mount; or hoping gain,
Thou, with a jar of money didst embark
For Balsorah, by sea. But chiefly thou
In that clear air took'st life; in Arcady
The haunted, land of song; and by the wells
Where most the gods frequent. There Chiron
old,

In the Pelethronian antre, taught thee lore:
The plants, he taught, and by the shining stars
In forests dim to steer. There hast thou seen
Immortal Pan dance secret in a glade,
And, dancing, roll his eyes; these where they
fell,

Shed glee, and through the congregated oaks
A flying horror winged; while all the earth
To the god's pregnant footing thrilled within.
Or whiles, beside the sobbing stream, he
breathed,

In his clutched pipe unformed and wizard
strains

Divine yet brutal; which the forest heard,
And thou, with awe; and far upon the plain
The unthinking ploughman started and gave
ear.

Now things there are that, upon him who sees,
A strong vocation lay; and strains there are
That whoso hears shall hear for evermore.
For evermore thou hear'st a mortal Pan
And those melodious godheads, ever young
And ever quiring on the mountains old.

What was this earth, child of the gods, to
thee?

Forth from thy dreamland thou, a dreamer
cam'st

And in thine ears the olden music rang,
And in thy mind the doings of the dead,
And those heroic ages long forgot.
To a so fallen earth, alas! too late,
Alas! in evil days, thy steps return,
To list at noon for nightingales, to grow
A dweller on the beach till Argo come
That came long since, a lingerer by the pool
Where that desired angel bathes no more.

As when the Indian to Dakota comes
Or farthest Idaho, and where he dwelt,
He with his clan, a humming city finds;
Thereon a while, amazed, he stares, and then
To right and leftward, like a questing dog,
Seeks first the ancestral altars, then the hearth
Long cold with rains, and where old terror
lodged,

And where the dead. So thee undying Hope,
With all her pack, hunts screaming through the
years:

Here, there, thou fleest; but nor here nor there
The pleasant gods abide, the glory dwells.

That, that was not Apollo, not the god.
This was not Venus, though she Venus seemed
A moment. And though fair yon river move,
She, all the way from disenchanted fount
To seas unhallowed runs; the gods forsook
Long since her trembling rushes; from her
plains

Disconsolate, long since adventure fled;
And now although the inviting river flows
And every poplared cape and every bend

Or willowy islet, win upon thy soul
And to thy hopeful shallop whisper speed;
Yet hope not thou at all; hope is no more;
And O, long since the golden groves are dead
The faery cities vanished from the land!

XVI.

TO W. E. HENLEY.

THE year runs through her phases; rain and
sun

Springtime and summer pass; winter succeeds;
But one pale season rules the house of death.
Cold falls the imprisoned daylight; fell disease
By each lean pallet squats, and pain and sleep
Toss gaping on the pillows.

But O thou!

Uprise and take thy pipe. Bid music flow,
Strains by good thoughts attended, like the
spring

The swallows follow over land and sea.
Pain sleeps at once; at once, with open eyes,
Dozing despair awakes. The shepherd sees
His flock come bleating home; the seaman
hears

Once more the cordage rattle. Airs of home!

Youth, love, and roses blossom; the gaunt ward
Dislimns and disappears, and, opening out,
Shows brooks and forests, and the blue beyond
Of mountains.

Small the pipe; but oh! do thou,
Peak-faced and suffering piper, blow therein
The dirge of heroes dead; and to these sick,
These dying, sound the triumph over death.
Behold! each greatly breathes; each tastes a
joy

Unknown before, in dying; for each knows
A hero dies with him — though unfulfilled,
Yet conquering truly — and not dies in vain.

So is pain cheered, death comforted; the house
Of sorrow smiles to listen. Once again —
O thou, Orpheus and Heracles, the bard
And the deliverer, touch the stops again!

XVII.

HENRY JAMES.

WHO comes to-night? We ope the doors in
vain.

Who comes? My bursting walls, can you contain

The presences that now together throng
Your narrow entry, as with flowers and song,
As with the air of life, the breath of talk?
Lo, how these fair immaculate women walk
Behind their jocund maker; and we see
Slighted *De Mauves*, and that far different she,
Gressie, the trivial sphynx; and to our feast
Daisy and *Barb* and *Chancellor* (she not least!)
With all their silken, all their airy kin,
Do like unbidden angels enter in.
But he, attended by these shining names,
Comes (best of all) himself — our welcome
James.

XVIII.

THE MIRROR SPEAKS.

WHERE the bells peal far at sea
Cunning fingers fashioned me.
There on palace walls I hung
While that Consuelo sung;
But I heard, though I listened well,
Never a note, never a trill,
Never a beat of the chiming bell.
There I hung and looked, and there
In my gray face, faces fair
Shone from under shining hair.
Well I saw the poising head,
But the lips moved and nothing said;
And when lights were in the hall,
Silent moved the dancers all.

So a while I glowed, and then
Fell on dusty days and men;

Long I slumbered packed in straw,
Long I none but dealers saw;
Till before my silent eye
One that sees came passing by.

Now with an outlandish grace,
To the sparkling fire I face
In the blue room at Skerryvore;
Where I wait until the door
Open, and the Prince of Men,
Henry James, shall come again.

XIX.

KATHARINE.

WE see you as we see a face
That trembles in a forest place
Upon the mirror of a pool
Forever quiet, clear, and cool;
And in the wayward glass appears
To hover between smiles and tears,
Elfin and human, airy and true,
And backed by the reflected blue.

•

XX.

TO F. J. S.

I READ, dear friend, in your dear face
Your life's tale told with perfect grace;
The river of your life I trace
Up the sun-checkered, devious bed
To the far-distant fountain-head.

Not one quick beat of your warm heart,
Nor thought that came to you apart,
Pleasure nor pity, love nor pain
Nor sorrow, has gone by in vain;
But as some lone, wood-wandering child
Brings home with him at evening mild
The thorns and flowers of all the wild,
From your whole life, O fair and true
Your flowers and thorns you bring with you!

XXI.

REQUIEM.

UNDER the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

XXII.

THE CELESTIAL SURGEON.

IF I have faltered more or less
In my great task of happiness;
If I have moved among my race
And shown no glorious morning face;
If beams from happy human eyes
Have moved me not; if morning skies,
Books, and my food, and summer rain
Knocked on my sullen heart in vain:—
Lord, thy most pointed pleasure take
And stab my spirit broad awake;
Or, Lord, if too obdurate I,
Choose thou, before that spirit die,
A piercing pain, a killing sin,
And to my dead heart run them in!

XXIII.

OUR LADY OF THE SNOWS.

Out of the sun, out of the blast,
Out of the world, alone I passed
Across the moor and through the wood
To where the monastery stood.
There neither lute nor breathing fife,
Nor rumour of the world of life,
Nor confidences low and dear,
Shall strike the meditative ear.
Aloof, unhelpful, and unkind,
The prisoners of the iron mind,
Where nothing speaks except the hell,
The unfraternal brothers dwell.

Poor, passionate men, still clothed afresh
With agonizing folds of flesh;
Whom the clear eyes solicit still
To some bold output of the will,
While fairy Fancy far before

And musing Memory-Hold-the-door
Now to heroic death invite
And now uncurtain fresh delight:
O, little boots it thus to dwell
On the remote unneighbour'd hill!

O, to be up and doing, O
Unfearing and unshamed to go
In all the uproar and the press
About my human business!
My undissuaded heart I hear
Whisper courage in my ear.
With voiceless calls, the ancient earth
Summons me to a daily birth.
Thou, O my love, ye, O my friends—
The gist of life, the end of ends—
To laugh, to love, to live, to die,
Ye call me by the ear and eye!

Forth from the casemate, on the plain
Where honour has the world to gain,
Pour forth and bravely do your part,
O knights of the unshielded heart!
Forth and forever forward!—out

From prudent turret and redoubt,
And in the mellay charge amain,
To fall, but yet to rise again!
Captive? ah, still, to honour bright,
A captive soldier of the right!
Or free and fighting, good with ill?
Unconquering but unconquered still!

And ye, O brethren, what if God,
When from heav'n's top He spies abroad,
And sees on this tormented stage
The noble war of mankind rage:
What if His vivifying eye,
O monks, should pass your corner by?
For still the Lord is Lord of might;
In deeds, in deeds, He takes delight;
The plow, the spear, the laden barks,
The field, the founded city, marks;
He marks the smiler of the streets,
The singer upon garden seats;
He sees the climber in the rocks:
To Him the shepherd folds his flocks.
For those He loves that underprop
With daily virtues heaven's top,

And bear the falling sky with ease,
Unfrowning caryatides.

Those he approves that ply the trade,
That rock the child, that wed the maid,
That with weak virtues, weaker hands,
Sow gladness on the peopled lands,
And still with laughter, song and shout,
Spin the great wheel of earth about.

But ye? — O ye who linger still,
Here in your fortress on the hill,
With placid face, with tranquil breath,
The unsought volunteers of death,
Our cheerful General on high
With careless looks may pass you by.

XXIV.

NOT yet, my soul, these friendly fields desert,
Where thou with grass, and rivers, and the
breeze,

And the bright face of day, thy dalliance
hadst;

Where to thine ear first sang the enraptured
birds;

Where love and thou that lasting bargain made.
The ship rides trimmed, and from the eternal
shore

Thou hearest airy voices; but not yet
Depart, my soul, not yet a while depart.
Freedom is far, rest far. Thou art with life
Too closely woven, nerve with nerve entwined;
Service still craving service, love for love,
Love for dear love, still suppliant with tears.
Alas, not yet thy human task is done!
A bond at birth is forged; a debt doth lie

Immortal on mortality. It grows —

By vast rebound it grows, unceasing growth;
Gift upon gift, alms upon alms, upreared,
From man, from God, from nature, till the
soul

At that so huge indulgence stands amazed.

Leave not, my soul, the unfoughten field, nor
leave

Thy debts dishonoured, nor thy place desert
Without due service rendered. For thy life,
Up, spirit, and defend that fort of clay,
Thy body, now beleaguered; whether soon
Or late she fall; whether to-day thy friends
Bewail thee dead, or, after years, a man
Grown old in honour and the friend of peace.
Contend, my soul, for moments and for hours;
Each is with service pregnant; each reclaimed
Is as a kingdom conquered, where to reign.
As when a captain rallies to the fight
His scattered legions, and beats ruin back,
He, on the field, encamps, well pleased in
mind.

Yet surely him shall fortune overtake,

Him smite in turn, headlong his ensigns drive;
And that dear land, now safe, to-morrow fall.
But he, unthinking, in the present good
Solely delights, and all the camps rejoice.

XXV.

It is not yours, O mother, to complain,
Not, mother, yours to weep,
Though nevermore your son again
Shall to your bosom creep,
Though nevermore again you watch your baby
sleep.

Though in the greener paths of earth,
Mother and child no more
We wander; and no more the birth
Of me whom once you bore
Seems still the brave reward that once it seemed
of yore;

Though as all passes, day and night,
The seasons and the years,
From you, O mother, this delight,
This also disappears—
Some profit yet survives of all your pangs and
tears.

The child, the seed, the grain of corn,
The acorn on the hill,
Each for some separate end is born
In season fit, and still
Each must in strength arise to work the
almighty will.

So from the hearth the children flee,
By that almighty hand
Austerely led; so one by sea
Goes forth, and one by land;
Nor aught of all man's sons escape from that
command.

So from the sally each obeys
The unseen almighty nod;
So till the ending all their ways
Blindfolded loath have trod:
Nor knew their task at all, but were the tools
of God.

And as the fervent smith of yore
Beat out the glowing blade,
Nor wielded in the front of war

The weapons that he made,
But in the tower at home still plied his ringing
trade;

So like a sword the son shall roam
On nobler missions sent;
And as the smith remained at home
In peaceful turret pent,
So sits the while at home the mother well
content.

XXVI.

THE SICK CHILD.

Child —

O MOTHER, lay your hand on my brow!

O mother, mother, where am I now?

Why is the room so gaunt and great?

Why am I lying awake so late?

Mother —

Fear not at all: the night is still;

Nothing is here that means you ill —

Nothing but lamps the whole town through,

And never a child awake but you.

Child —

Mother, mother, speak low in my ear,

Some of the things are so great and near,

Some are so small and far away,

I have a fear that I cannot say.

What have I done, and what do I fear,

And why are you crying, mother dear?

Mother —

Out in the city, sounds begin;
Thank the kind God, the carts come in!
An hour or two more, and God is so kind,
The day shall be blue in the window-blind,
Then shall my child go sweetly asleep,
And dream of the birds and the hills of
sheep.

XXVII.

IN MEMORIAM F. A. S.

YET, O stricken heart, remember, O remember
How of human days he lived the better part.
April came to bloom and never dim December
Breathed its killing chills upon the head or
heart.

Doomed to know not winter, only spring, a
being

Trod the flowery April blithely for a while,
Took his fill of music, joy of thought and
seeing,

Came and stayed and went, nor ever ceased
to smile.

Came and stayed and went, and now when all
is finished,

You alone have crossed the melancholy
stream,

Yours the pang, but his, O his, the undi-
minished

Undecaying gladness, undeparted dream.

All that life contains of torture, toil, and
treason,

Shame, dishonour, death, to him were but a
name.

Here, a boy, he dwelt through all the singing
season

And ere the day of sorrow departed as he
came.

Davos, 1881.

XXVIII.

TO MY FATHER.

PEACE and her huge invasion to these shores
Puts daily home; innumerable sails
Dawn on the far horizon and draw near;
Innumerable loves, uncounted hopes
To our wild coasts, not darkling now, approach:
Not now obscure, since thou and thine are
there,

And bright on the lone isle, the foundered reef,
The long, resounding foreland, Pharos stands.

These are thy works, O father, these thy
crown;

Whether on high the air be pure, they shine
Along the yellowing sunset, and all night
Among the unnumbered stars of God they shine;
Or whether fogs arise and far and wide
The low sea-level drown — each finds a tongue
And all night long the tolling bell resounds:

So shine, so toll, till night be overpast,
Till the stars vanish, till the sun return,
And in the haven rides the fleet secure.

In the first hour, the seaman in his skiff
Moves through the unmoving bay, to where the
town

Its earliest smoke into the air upbreathes
And the rough hazels climb along the beach.
To the tugg'd oar the distant echo speaks.
The ship lies resting, where by reef and roost
Thou and thy lights have led her like a child.

This hast thou done, and I—can I be base?
I must arise, O father, and to port
Some lost, complaining seaman pilot home.

XXIX.

IN THE STATES.

WITH half a heart I wander here
As from an age gone by
A brother — yet though young in years,
An elder brother, I.

You speak another tongue than mine,
Though both were English born.
I toward the night of time decline,
You mount into the morn.

Youth shall grow great and strong and free,
But age must still decay:
To-morrow for the States — for me,
England and Yesterday.

San Francisco.

XXX.

A PORTRAIT.

I AM a kind of farthing dip,
Unfriendly to the nose and eyes;
A blue-behinded ape, I skip
Upon the trees of Paradise.

At mankind's feast, I take my place
In solemn, sanctimonious state,
And have the air of saying grace
While I defile the dinner-plate.

I am "the smiler with the knife,"
The battener upon garbage, I —
Dear Heaven, with such a rancid life,
Were it not better far to die?

Yet still, about the human pale,
I love to scamper, love to race,
To swing by my irreverent tail
All over the most holy place;

And when at length, some golden day,
The unfailing sportsman, aiming at,
Shall bag, me — all the world shall say,
Thank God, and there's an end of that!

XXXI.

SING clearer, Muse, or evermore be still,
Sing truer or no longer sing!
No more the voice of melancholy Jacques
To wake a weeping echo in the hill;
But as the boy, the pirate of the spring,
From the green elm a living linnet takes,
One natural verse recapture — then be still.

XXXII.

A CAMP.¹

THE bed was made, the room was fit,
By punctual eve the stars were lit;
The air was still, the water ran,
No need was there for maid or man,
When we put up, my ass and I,
At God's green caravanserai.

¹ From "Travels with a Donkey."

XXXIII.

THE COUNTRY OF THE CAMISARDS.¹

WE travelled in the print of olden wars,
Yet all the land was green
And love we found, and peace,
Where fire and war had been.

They pass and smile, the children of the sword —
No more the sword they wield;
And O, how deep the corn
Along the battlefield!

¹ From "Travels with a Donkey."

XXXIV.

SKERRYVORE.

FOR love of lovely words and for the sake
Of those, my kinsmen and my countrymen,
Who early and late in the windy ocean toiled
To plant a star for seamen, where was then
The surfy haunt of seals and cormorants:
I, on the lintel of this cot, inscribe
The name of a strong tower.

XXXV.

SKERRYVORE: THE PARALLEL.

HERE all is sunny, and when the truant gull
Skims the green level of the lawn, his wing
Dispetals roses; here the house is framed
Of kneaded brick and the plumed mountain
 pine,

Such clay as artists fashion and such wood
As the tree-climbing urchin breaks. But there
Eternal granite hewn from the living isle
And dowelled with brute iron, rears a tower
That from its wet foundation to its crown
Of glittering glass, stands, in the sweep of
 winds,

Immovable, immortal, eminent.

XXXVI.

My house, I say. But hark to the sunny doves
That make my roof the arena of their loves,
That gyre about the gable all day long
And fill the chimneys with their murmurous
song:

Our house, they say; and *mine*, the cat declares

And spreads his golden fleece upon the chairs;
And *mine*, the dog, and rises stiff with wrath
If any alien foot profane the path.

So too the buck that trimmed my terraces,
Our whilome gardener, called the garden his;
Who now, deposed, surveys my plain abode
And his late kingdom, only from the road.

XXXVII.

My body, which my dungeon is,
And yet my parks and palaces:—

Which is so great that there I go
All the day long to and fro,
And when the night begins to fall
Throw down my bed and sleep, while all
The building hums with wakefulness—
Even as a child of savages
When evening takes her on her way
(She having roamed a summer's day
Along the mountain-sides and scalp),
Sleeps in an antre of that alp:—

Which is so broad and high that there,
As in the topless fields of air,
My fancy soars like to a kite
And faints in the blue infinite:—

Which is so strong, my strongest throes
And the rough world's besieging blows
Not break it, and so weak withal,
Death ebbs and flows in its loose wall

As the green sea in fishers' nets,
And tops its topmost parapets:—

Which is so wholly mine that I
Can wield its whole artillery,
And mine so little, that my soul
Dwells in perpetual control,
And I but think and speak and do
As my dead fathers move me to:—

If this born body of my bones
The beggared soul so barely owns,
What money passed from hand to hand,
What creeping custom of the land,
What deed of author or assign,
Can make a house a thing of mine?

XXXVIII.

SAY not of me that weakly I declined
The labours of my sires, and fled the sea,
The towers we founded and the lamps we lit,
To play at home with paper like a child.

But rather say: *In the afternoon of time
A strenuous family dusted from its hands
The sand of granite, and beholding far
Along the sounding coast its pyramids
And tall memorials catch the dying sun,
Smiled well content; and to this childish task
Around the fire addressed its evening hours.*

BOOK II.—IN SCOTS.

TABLE OF COMMON SCOTTISH VOWEL SOUNDS

ae }
ai } = open A, as in rare.

a' }
au } = AW, as in law.
aw }

ca = open E, as in mere, but this with exceptions, as
heather = heather, wean = wain, lear = lair.

ee }
ei } = open E, as in mere.
ie }

oa = open O, as in more.

ou = doubled O, as in poor.

ow = OW, as in bower.

u = doubled O, as in poor.

ui or ü before R = (say roughly) open A, as in rare.

ui or ü before any other consonant = (say roughly) close I,
as in grin.

y = open I, as in kite.

i = pretty nearly what you please, much as in English.

Heaven guide the reader through that labyrinth!
But in Scots it dodges usually from the short I, as
in grin, to the open E, as in mere. Find and
blind, I may remark, are pronounced to rhyme
with the preterite of grin.

I.

THE MAKER TO POSTERITY.

FAR 'yont amang the years to be,
When a' we think, an' a' we see,
An' a' we luve, 's been dung ajee
 By time's rouch shouter,
An' what was richt and wrang for
 Lies mangled throu'ther,

It's possible — it's hardly mair —
That some ane, ripin' after lear —
Some auld professor or young heir,
 If still there's either —
May find an' read me, an' be sair
 Perplexed, puir brither!

"What tongue does your auld bookie speak?"
He'll spier; an' I, his mou to steik:
"No bein' fit to write in Greek,
 I wrote in Lallan,

*Dear to my heart as the peat reek,
Auld as Tantallon.*

*“ Few spak it than, an’ noo there’s nane.
My puir auld sangs lie a’ their lane,
Their sense, that aince was braw an’ plain,
Tint a’ thegither,
Like runes upon a standin’ stane
Amang the heather.*

*“ But think not you the brae to speel;
You, tae, maun chow the bitter peel;
For a’ your lear, for a’ your skeel,
Ye ’re nane sae lucky;
An’ things are mebbe waur than weel
For you, my buckie.*

*“ The hale concern (baith hens an’ eggs,
Baith books an’ writers, stars an’ clegs)
Noo stachers upon lowsent legs
An’ wears awa’;
The tack o’ mankind, near the dregs,
Rins unco law.*

*"Your book, that in some braw new tongue,
Ye wrote or prentit, preached or sung,
Will still be just a bairn, an' young
In fame an' years,
Whan the hale planet's guts are dung
About your ears ;*

*"An' you, sair gruppin' to a spar
Or whammled wi' some bleezin' star,
Cryin' tae ken whaur deil ye are,
Hame, France, or Flanders —
Whang sindry like a railway car
An' flie in danders."*

II.

ILLE TERRARUM.

FRAE nirly, nippin', Eas'lan' breeze,
Frae Norlan' snaw, an' haar o' seas,
Weel happit in your gairden trees,
 A bonny bit,
Atween the muckle Pentland's knees,
 Secure ye sit.

Beeches an' aiks entwine their theek,
An' firs, a stench, auld-farrant clique.
A' simmer day, your chimleys reek,
 Couthy and bien;
An' here an' there your windies keek
 Amang the green.

A pickle plats an' paths an' posies,
A wheen auld gillyflowers an' roses:
A ring o' wa's the hale encloses
 Frae sheep or men;

An' there the auld housie beeks an' dozes
A' by her lane.

The gairdner crooks his weary back
A' day in the pitaty-track,
Or mebbe stops a while to crack
Wi' Jane the cook,
Or at some buss, worm-eaten-black,
To gie a look.

Frae the high hills the curlew ca's;
The sheep gang baaing by the wa's;
Or whiles a clan o' roosty craws
Cangle together;
The wild bees seek the gairden raws,
Weariet wi' heather.

Or in the gloamin' douce an' gray
The sweet-throat mavis tunes her lay;
The herd comes linkin' doun the brae;
An' by degrees
The muckle siller mune maks way
Amang the trees.

Here aft hae I, wi' sober heart,
For meditation sat apairt,
When orra loves or kittle art
 Perplexed my mind;
Here socht a balm for ilka smart
 O' humankind.

Here aft, weel neukit by my lane,
Wi' Horace, or perhaps Montaigne,
The mornin' hours hae come an' gane
 Abüne my heid—
I wadnae gi'en a chucky-stane
 For a' I'd read.

But noo the auld city, street by street,
An' winter fu' o' snaw an' sleet,
A while shut in my gangrel feet
 An' goavin' mettle;
Noo is the soopit ingle sweet,
 An' liltin' kettle.

An' noo the winter winds complain;
Cauld lies the glaur in ilka lane;

On draigled hizzie, tautit wean,
An' drucken lads,
In the mirk nicht, the winter rain
Dribbles an' blads.

Whan bugles frae the Castle rock,
An' beaten drums, wi' dowie shock,
Wauken, at cauld-rife sax o'clock,
My chitterin' frame,
I mind me on the kintry cock,
The kintry hame.

I mind me on yon bonny bield;
An' Fancy traivels far afield
To gaither a' that gairdens yield
O' sun an' Simmer:
To hearten up a dowie chield,
Fancy's the limmer!

III.

WHEN aince Aprile has fairly come,
An' birds may bigg in winter's lum,
An' pleisure's spreid for a' and some
 O' whatna state,
Love, wi' her auld recruitin' drum,
 Than taks the gate.

The heart plays dunt wi' main an' micht;
The lasses' een are a' sae bricht,
Their dresses are sae braw an' ticht,
 The bonny birdies!—
Puir winter virtue at the sight
 Gangs heels ower hurdies.

An' aye as love frae land to land
Tirls the drum wi' eident hand,
A' men collect at her command
 'Toun-bred' or land'art,
An' follow in a denty band
 Her gaucy standart.

An' I, wha sang o' rain an' snaw,

An' weary winter weel awa',

Noo busk me in a jacket braw,

An' tak my place

I' the ram-stam, harum-scarum raw

Wi' smilin' face.

IV.

A MILE AN' A BITTOCK.

A MILE an' a bittock, a mile or twa,
Abüne the burn, ayont the law,
Davie an' Donal' an' Cherlie an' a',
An' the müne was shinin' clearly!

Ane went hame wi' the ither, an' then
The ither went hame wi' the ither twa men,
An' baith wad return him the service again,
An' the müne was shinin' clearly!

The clocks were chappin' in house an' ha',
Eleeven, twal, an' ane an' twa;
An' the guidman's face was turnt to the wa',
An' the müne was shinin' clearly!

A wind got up frae affa the sea,
It blew the stars as clear's could be,

It blew in the een of a' o' the three,
An' the mune was shinin' clearly!

Noo, Davie was first to get sleep in his head,
"The best o' frien's maun twine," he said;
"I'm weariet, an' here I'm awa' to my bed."
An' the mune was shinin' clearly!

Twa o' them walkin' an' crackin' their lane,
The mornin' licht cam gray an' plain,
An' the birds they yammert on stick an' stane,
An' the mune was shinin' clearly!

O years ayont, O years awa',
My lads, ye'll mind whate'er befa' —
My lads, ye'll mind on the bield o' the law,
When the mune was shinin' clearly.

V.

A LOWDEN SABBATH MORN.

THE clinkum-clank o' Sabbath bells
Noo to the hoastin' rookery swells,
Noo faintin' laigh in shady dells,
 Sounds far an' near,
An' through the simmer kintry tells
 Its tale o' cheer.

An' noo, to that melodious play,
A' deidly awn the quiet sway —
A' ken their solemn holiday,
 Bestial an' human,
The singin' lintie on the brae,
 The restin' plou'man.

He, mair than a' the lave o' men,
His week completit joys to ken;
Half-dressed, he daunders out an' in,
 Perplext wi' leisure;

An' his raxt limbs he'll rax again
Wi' painfü' pleasure.

The steerin' mither strang aft
Noo shoos the bairnies but a bit;
Noo cries them ben, their Sinday shüit
To scart upon them,
Or sweeties in their pouch to pit,
Wi' blessin's on them.

The lasses, clean frae tap to taes,
Are busked in crunklin' underclaes;
The gartened hose, the weel-filled stays,
The nakit shift,
A' bleached on bonny greens for days,
An' white's the drift.

An' noo to face the kirkward mile:
The guidman's hat o' dacent style,
The blackit shoon, we noo maun fyle
As white's the miller:
A waefü' peety tae, to spile
The warth o' siller.

Our Marg'et, aye sae keen to crack,
Douce-stappin' in the stoury track,
Her emeralt gown a' kiltit back
 Frae snawy coats,
White-ankled, leads the kirkward pack
 Wi' Dauvit Groats.

A thocht ahint, in runkled breeks
A' spiled wi' lyin' by for weeks,
The guidman follows closs, an' cleiks
 The sonsie missis;
His sarious face at aince bespeaks
 The day that this is.

And aye an' while we nearer draw
To whaur the kirton lies alaw,
Mair neebors, comin' saft an' slaw
 Frae here an' there,
The thicker thrang the gate an' caw
 The stour in air.

But hark! the bells frae nearer clang;
To rowst the slaw, their sides they bang;

An' see! black coats a'ready thrang
The green kirkyaird,
And at the yett, the chestnuts spang
That brocht the laird.

The solemn elders at the plate
Stand drinkin' deep the pride o' state:
That practised hands as gash an' great
As Lords o' Session;
The later named, a wee thing blate
In their expression.

The prentit stanes that mark the deid,
Wi' lengthened lip, the sarious read;
Syne wag a moraleesin' heid,
An' then an' there
Their hirplin' practice an' their creed
Try hard to square.

It's here our Merren lang has lain,
A wee bewast the table-stane;
An' yon's the grave o' Sandy Blane;
An' further ower,
The mither's brithers, dacent men!
Lie a' the fower.

Here the guidman sall bide awee
To dwall amang the deid; to see
Auld faces clear in fancy's e'e;
 Belike to hear
Auld voices fa'in' saft an' slee
 On fancy's ear.

Thus, on the day o' solemn things,
The bell that in the steeple swings
To fauld a scaattered faim'ly rings
 Its walcome screed;
An' just a wee thing nearer brings
 The quick an' deid.

But noo the bell is ringin' in;
To tak their places, folk begin;
The minister himsel' will shüne
 Be up the gate,
Filled fu' wi' clavers about sin
 An' man's estate.

The tünes are up — *French*, to be shüre,
The faithfü' *French*, an' twa-three mair.
The auld prezenter, hoastin' sair,
 Wales out the portions,

An' yirks the tūne into the air
Wi' queer contortions.

Follows the prayer, the readin' next,
An' than the fisslin' for the text—
The twa-three last to find it, vext
But kind o' proud;
An' than the peppermints are raxed,
An' southernwood.

For noo 's the time whan pows are seen
Nid-noddin' like a mandareen;
When tenty mithers stap a preen
In sleepin' weans;
An' nearly half the parochine
Forget their pains.

There 's just a waukrif' twa or three:
Thrawn commentautors sweer to 'gree,
Weans glowrin' at the bumblin' bee
On windie-glasses,
Or lads that tak a keek a-gee
At sonsie lasses.

Himsel', meanwhile, frae whaur he cocks
An' bobs belaw the soundin'-box,
The treesures of his words unlocks
 Wi' prodigality,
An' deals some unco dingin' knocks
 To infidelity.

Wi' sappy unction, hoo he burkes
The hopes o' men that trust in works,
Expounds the fau'ts o' ither kirks,
 An' shaws the best o' them
No muckle better than mere Turks,
 When a' 's confessed o' them.

Bethankit! what a bonny creed!
What mair would ony Christian need?—
The braw words rumm'le ower his heid,
 Nor steer the sleeper;
An' in their restin' graves, the deid
 Sleep aye the deeper.

NOTE. — It may be guessed by some that I had a certain parish in my eye, and this makes it proper I should add a word of disclamation. In my time there have been two ministers in that parish. Of the first I have a special

reason to speak well, even had there been any to think ill. The second I have often met in private, and long (in the due phrase) "sat under" in his church, and neither here nor there have I heard an unkind or ugly word upon his lips. The preacher of the text had thus no original in that particular parish; but when I was a boy, he might have been observed in many others; he was then (like the schoolmaster) abroad; and, by recent advices, it would seem he has not yet entirely disappeared.

VI.

THE SPAEWIFE.

O, I wad like to ken—to the beggar-wife
says I—

Why chops are guid to brander and nane sae
guid to fry.

An' siller, that's sae braw to keep, is brawer
still to gi'e.

—*It's gey an' easy spierin'*, says the beggar-
wife to me.

O, I wad like to ken—to the beggar-wife
says I—

Hoo a' things come to be whaur we find them
when we try,

The lasses in their claes an' the fishes in the
sea.

—*It's gey an' easy spierin'*, says the beggar-
wife to me.

O, I wad like to ken—to the beggar-wife
says I—

Why lads are a' to sell an' lasses a' to buy;
An' naebody for dacency but barely twa or
three

—*It's gey an' easy spierin'*, says the beggar-
wife to me.

O, I wad like to ken—to the beggar-wife
says I—

Gin death's as shüre to men as killin' is to kye,
Why God has filled the yearth sae fu' o' tasty
things to pree.

—*It's gey an' easy spierin'*, say the beggar-
wife to me.

O, I wad like to ken—to the beggar-wife
says I—

The reason o' the cause an' the wherefore o'
the why,

Wi' mony anither riddle brings the tear into
my e'e.

—*It's gey an' easy spierin'*, says the beggar-
wife to me.

VII.

THE BLAST — 1875.

It's rainin'. Weet's the gairden sod
Weet the lang roads whaur gangrels plod —
A maist unceevil thing o' God

In mid July —

If ye'll just curse the sneckdraw, dod!

An' sae wull I!

He's a braw place in heev'n, ye ken,
An' lea's us puir, forjaskit men
Clamjamfried in the but and ben

He ca's the earth —

A wee bit inconvenient den

No muckle worth;

An' whiles, at orra times, keeks out,
Sees what puir mankind are about;
An' if He can, I've little doubt,

Upsets their plans;

He hates a' mankind, brainch and root,
An' a' that's man's.

An' whiles, whan they tak heart again,
An' life i' the sun looks braw an' plain,
Doun comes a jaw o' droukin' rain
Upon their honours —
God sends a spate outower the plain,
Or mebbe thun'ers.

Lord safe us, life 's an unco thing!
Simmer an' Winter, Yule an' Spring,
The damned, dour-heartit seasons bring
A feck o' trouble.
I wadna try 't to be a king —
No, nor for double.

But since we 're in it, willy-nilly,
We maun be watchfü', wise, an' skilly
An' no mind ony ither billy,
Lassie nor God.
But drink — that 's my best counsel till 'e:
Sae tak the nod.

VIII.

THE COUNTERBLAST — 1886.

My bonny man, the warld, it's true,
Was made for neither me nor you;
It's just a place to warstle through,
As Job confessed o't;
And aye the best that we'll can do
Is mak the best o't.

There's rowth o' wrang, I'm free to say:
The simmer brunt, the winter blae,
The face of earth a' fyled wi' clay
An' dour wi' chuckies,
An' life a rough an' land'art play
For country buckies.

An' food's anither name for clart;
An' beasts an' brambles bite an' scart;
An' what would we be like, my heart!
If bared o' claethin'?

—Aweel, I cannae mend your cart:
It's that or naethin'.

A feck o' folk frae first to last
Have through this queer experience passed;
Twa-three, I ken, just damn an' blast
The hale transaction;
But twa-three ithers, east an' wast,
Fand satisfaction.

Whaur braid the briery muirs expand,
A waefü' an' a weary land,
The bumblebees, a gowden band,
Are blithely hingin';
An' there the canty wanderer fand
The laverock singin'.

Trout in the burn grow great as herr'n',
The simple sheep can find their fair'n';
The wind blaws clean about the cairn
Wi' caller air;
The muircock an' the barefit bairn
Are happy there.

Sic-like the howes o' life to some:
Green loans whaur they ne'er fash their thumb,
But mark the muckle winds that come,
 Soopin' an' cool,
Or hear the powrin' burnie drum
 In the shilfa's pool.

The evil wi' the guid they tak;
They ca' a gray thing gray, no black;
To a steigh brae, a stubborn back
 Addressin' daily;
An' up the rude, unbielgy track
 O' life, gang gayly.

What you would like 's a palace ha',
Or Sinday parlour dink an' braw
Wi' a' things ordered in a raw
 By denty leddies.
Weel, than, ye cannae hae 't: that's a'
 That to be said is.

An' since at life ye've taen the grue,
An' winnae blithely hirsle through,

Ye 've fund the very thing to do—
That 's to drink speerit;
An' shüne we 'll hear the last o' you—
An' blithe to hear it!

The shoön ye coft, the life ye lead,
Ithers will heir when aince ye 're deid;
They 'll heir your tasteless bite o' breid,
An' find it sappy;
They 'll to your dulefü' house succeed,
An' there be happy.

As whan a glum an' fractious wean
Has sat an' sullened by his lane
Till, wi' a rowstin' skelp, he 's taen
An' shoo'd to bed—
The ither bairns a' fa' to play'n',
As gleg's a gled.

IX.

THE COUNTERBLAST IRONICAL.

It 's strange that God should fash to frame
The yearth and lift sae hie,
An' clean forget to explain the same
To a gentleman like me.

They gutsy, donnered ither folk,
Their weird they weel may dree;
But why present a pig in a poke
To a gentleman like me?

They ither folk their parritch eat
An' sup their sugared tea;
But the mind is no to be wyld wi' meat
Wi' a gentleman like me.

They ither folk, they court their joes
At gloamin' on the lea;

But they 're made of a commoner clay, I
 suppose,
Than a gentleman like me.

They ither folk, for richt or wrang,
 They suffer, bleed, or dee;
But a' thir things are an emp'y sang
 To a gentleman like me.

It's a different thing that I demand,
 Tho' humble as can be —
A statement fair in my Maker's hand
 To a gentleman like me:

A clear account writ fair an' broad,
 An' a plain apologie;
Or the deevil a ceevil word to God
 From a gentleman like me.

X.

THEIR LAUREATE TO AN ACADEMY CLASS DINNER CLUB.

DEAR Thamson class, whaure'er I gang
It aye comes ower me wi' a spang:

*"Lordsake! they Thamson lads — (deil hang
Or else Lord mend them!) —*

*An' that wanchancy annual sang
I ne'er can send them!"*

Straucht, at the name a trusty tyke,
My conscience girrs ahint the dyke;
Straucht on my hinderlands I fyke

To find a rhyme t' ye;
Pleased — although mebbe no pleased-like
To gie my time t' ye.

*"Weel," an' says you, wi' heavin' breist,
"Sae far, sae guid, but what's the neist?"*

*Yearly we gaither to the feast,
A' hopefii' men —
Yearly we skelloch 'Hang the beast —
Nae sang again !' "*

My lads, an' what am I to say?
Ye shüirely ken the Muse's way:
Yestreen, as gleg's a tyke — the day,
Thrawn like a cuddy:
Her conduc', that to her's a play,
Deith to a body.

Aft whan I sat an' made my mane,
Aft whan I laboured burd-alane
Fishin' for rhymes an' findin' nane,
Or nane were fit for ye —
Ye judged me cauld's a chucky stane —
No car'n' a bit for ye!

But saw ye ne'er some pingein' bairn
As weak as a pitaty-par'n' —
Less üsed wi' guidin' horse-shoe airn
Than steerin' crowdie —

Packed aff his lane, by moss an' cairn,
To ca' the howdie.

Wae's me, for the puir callant than!
He wambles like a poke o' bran,
An' the lowse rein, as hard's he can,
Pu's, trem'lin' handit;
Till, blaff! upon his hinderlan'
Behauld him landit.

Sic-like — I awn the weary fac' —
Whan on my muse the gate I tak,
An' see her gleed e'e raxin' back
To keek ahint her; —
To me the brig of heev'n gangs black
As blackest winter.

*"Lordsake! we're aff," thinks I, "but whaur?
On what abhorred and whinny scaur,
Or whammled in what sea o' glaur,
Will she desert me?
An' will she just disgrace? or waur —
Will she no hurt me?"*

Kittle the quære! But at least
The day I've backed the fashious beast,
While she, wi' mony a spang an' reist,
 Flang heels ower bonnet;
An' a' triumphant — for your feast,
 Hae! there's your sonnet!

XI.

EMBRO HIE KIRK.

THE Lord Himsel' in former days
Waled out the proper tūnes for praise
An' named the proper kind o' claes
For folk to preach in:
Preceese and in the chief o' ways
Important teachin'.

He ordered a' things, late and air';
He ordered folk to stand at prayer
(Although I cannae just mind where
He gave the warnin'),
An' pit pomatum on their hair
On Sabbath mornin'.

The hale o' life by His commands
Was ordered to a body's hands;
But see! this *corpus juris* stands
By a' forgotten;

An' God's religion in a' lands
Is deid an' rotten.

While thus the lave o' mankind 's lost,
O' Scotland still God maks His boast —
Puir Scotland, on whase barren coast
A score or twa
Auld wives wi' mutches an' a hoast
Still keep His law.

In Scotland, a wheen canty, plain,
Douce kintry-leevin' folk retain
The Truth — or did so aince — alane
Of a' men leevin';
An' noo just twa o' them remain —
Just Begg an' Niven.

For noo, unfaithfü' to the Lord
Auld Scotland joins the rebel horde;
Her human hymn-books on the board
She noo displays:
An' Embro Hie Kirk 's been restored
In popish ways.

O *punctum temporis* for action
To a' o' the reformin' faction,
If yet, by ony act or paction,
Thocht, word, or sermon,
This dark an' damnable transaction
Micht-yet determine!

For see — as Doctor Begg explains —
Hoo easy 't 's düne! a pickle weans,
Wha in the Hie Street gaither stanes
By his instruction,
The uncovenantit, pentit panes
Ding to destruction.

Up, Niven, or ower late — an' dash
Laigh in the glaur that carnal hash;
Let spires and pews wi' gran' stramash
Thegether fa';
The rumlin' kist o' whustles smash
In pieces sma'.

Noo choose ye out a walie hammer;
About the knottit buttress clam'er;

Alang the steep roof stoyt an' stammer,
A gate mis-chancy;
On the aul' spire, the bells' hie cha'mer,
Dance your bit dancie.

Ding, devel, dunt, destroy, an' ruin,
Wi' carnal stanes the square bestrewin',
Till your loud chaps frae Kyle to Fruin,
Frae hell to heeven,
Tell the guid wark that baith are doin' —
Baith Begg an' Niven.

XII.

THE SCOTSMAN'S RETURN FROM ABROAD.

(In a letter from Mr. Thomson to Mr. Johnstone.)

IN mony a foreign pairt I've been,
An' mony an unco ferlie seen,
Since, Mr. Johnstone, you and I
Last walkit upon Cocklerye.
Wi' gleg, observant een, I pass't
By sea an' land, through East an' Wast,
And still in ilka age an' station
Saw naething but abomination.
In thir uncovenantit lands
The gangrel Scot uplifts his hands
At lack of a' sectarian fush'n,
An' cauld religious destitütion.
He rins, puir man, frae place to place,
Tries a' their graceless means o' grace,
Preacher on preacher, kirk on kirk —
This yin a stot an' thon a stirk —

A bletherin' clan, no warth a preen,
As bad as Smith of Aiberdeen!

At last, across the weary faem,
Frae far, outlandish pairts I came.
On ilka side o' me I fand
Fresh tokens o' my native land.
Wi' whatna joy I hailed them a' —
The hilltaps standin' raw by raw,
The public house, the Hielan' birks,
And a' the bonny U. P. kirks!
But maistly thee, the bluid o' Scots,
Frae Maidenkirke to John o' Grots,
The king o' drinks, as I conceive it,
Talisker, Isla, or Glenlivet!

For after years wi' a pockmantie
Frae Zanzibar to Alicante,
In mony a fash an' sair affliction
I gie't as my sincere conviction —
Of a' their foreign tricks an' pliskies,
I maist abominate their whiskies.
Nae doot, themsel's, they ken it weel,
An' wi' a hash o' leemon peel,

An' ice an' siccan filth, they ettle
The stawsome kind o' goo to settle;
Sic weresh apothecary's broos wi'
As Scotsmen scorn to fyle their moo's wi'.

An', man, I was a blithe hame-comer
Whan first I syndit out my rummer.
Ye should hae seen me then, wi' care
The less important pairts prepare;
Syne, weel contentit wi' it a',
Pour in the speerits wi' a jaw!
I didnae drink, I didnae speak —
I only snowkit up the reek.
I was sae pleased therein to paidle,
I sat an' plowtered wi' my ladle.

An' blithe was I, the morrow's morn,
To daunder through the stookit corn,
And after a' my strange mishanthers,
Sit doun amang my ain dissenters.
An', man, it was a joy to me
The pu'pit an' the pews to see,
The pennies dirlin' in the plate,
The elders lookin' on in state;

An' 'mang the first, as it befell,
Wha should I see, sir, but yoursel'?

I was, and I will no deny it,
At the first gliff a hantle tryit
To see yoursel' in sic a station—
It seemed a doubtfü' dispensation.
The feelin' was a mere digression;
For shüne I understood the session,
An' mindin Aiken an' M'Neil,
I wondered they had düne sae weel.
I saw I had mysel' to blame;
For had I but remained at hame,
Aiblins—though no ava' deservin' 't—
They micht hae named your humble servant.

The kirk was filled, the door was steeked;
Up to the pu'pit ance I keeked;
I was mair pleased than I can tell—
It was the minister himsel'!
Proud, proud was I to see his face,
After sae lang awa' frae grace.
Pleased as I was, I'm no denyin'
Some maitters were not edifyin';
For first I fand—an' here was news!—

Mere hymn-books cockin' in the pews —
A humanized abomination,
Unfit for ony congregation.
Syne, while I still was on the tenter,
I scunnered at the new prezentor;
I thocht him gesterin' an' cauld —
A sair declension frae the auld.
Syne, as though a' the faith was wreckit,
The prayer was not what I'd exspeckit.
Himsel', as it appeared to me,
Was no the man he üsed to be.
But just as I was growin' vext
He waled a maist judeecious text,
An' launchin' into his prelections,
Swoopt, wi' a skirl, on a' defections.

O what a gale was on my speerit
To hear the p'int o' doctrine clearit,
And a' the horrors o' damnation
Set furth wi' faithfü' ministration!
Nae shauchlin' testimony here —
We were a' damned, an' that was clear.
I owned, wi' gratitude an' wonder,
He was a pleasure to sit under.

XIII.

LATE in the nicht in bed I lay,
The winds were at their weary play,
An' tirlin' wa's an' skirlin' wae
Through heev'n they battered;—
On-ding o' hail, on-blaff o' spray,
The tempest blattered.

The masoned house it dinled through;
It dung the ship, it cowped the coo';
The rankit aiks it overthrew,
Had braved a' weathers;
The strang sea-gleds it took an' blew
Awa' like feathers.

The thraes o' fear on a' were shed,
An' the hair rose, an' slumber fled,
An' lights were lit an' prayers were said
Through a' the kintry;
An' the cauld terror clum in bed
Wi' a' an' sindry.

To hear in the pit-mirk on hie
The brangled collieshangie flie,
The warl' they thocht, wi' land an' sea,
 Itsel' wad cowpit;
An' for auld airn, the smashed debris
 By God be rowpit.

Meanwhile frae far Aldeboran,
To folks wi' talescopes in han',
O' ships that cowpit, winds that ran,
 Nae sign was seen,
But the wee warl' in sunshine span
 As bricht's a preen.

I, tae, by God's especial grace,
Dwall denty in a bieldy place
Wi' hosened feet, wi' shaven face,
 Wi' dacent mainners:
A grand example to the race
 O' tautit sinners!

The wind may blaw, the heathen rage,
The deil may start on the rampage;—
The sick in bed, the thief in cage—
 What's a' to me?

Cosh in my house, a sober sage,
I sit an' see.

An' whiles the bluid spangs to my bree,
To lie sae saft, to live sae free,
While better men maun do an' die
In unco places.

"Whaur's God?" I cry, an' *"Whae is me
To hae sic graces?"*

I mind the fecht the sailors keep,
But fire or can'le, rest or sleep,
In darkness an' the muckle deep;
An' mind beside
The herd that on the hills o' sheep
Has wandered wide.

I mind me on the hoastin' weans —
The penny joes on causey stanes —
The auld folk wi' the crazy banes,
Baith auld an' puir,
That aye maun thole the winds an' rains
An' labour sair.

An' whiles I'm kind o' pleased a blink,
An' kind o' fleyed forby, to think,
For a' my rowth o' meat an' drink
 An' waste o' crumb,
I'll mebbe have to thole wi' skink
 In Kingdom Come.

For God whan jowes the Judgment bell,
Wi' His ain Hand, His Leevin' Sel',
Sall ryve the guid (as Prophets tell)
 Frae them that had it;
And in the reamin' pat o' hell,
 The rich be scaddit.

O Lord, if this indeed be sae,
Let daw that sair an' happy day!
Again' the warl, grawn auld an' gray,
 Up wi' your aixe!
An' let the puir enjoy their play—
 I'll thole my paiks.

XIV.

MY CONSCIENCE!

OF a' the ills that flesh can fear,
The loss o' frien's, the lack o' gear,
A yowlin' tyke, a glandered mear,
A lassie's nonsense—
There's just ae thing I cannae bear,
An' that's my conscience.

Whan day (an' a' excüse) has gane,
An' wark is düne, an' duty's plain,
An' to my chalmer a' my lane
I creep apairt,
My conscience! hoo the yammerin' pain
Stends to my heart!

A' day wi' various ends in view
The hairsts o' time I had to pu',
An' made a hash wad staw a soo,
Let be a man!—

My conscience! whan my han's were fü',
Whaur were ye than?

An' there were a' the lures o' life,
There pleasure skirlin' on the fife,
There anger, wi' the hotchin' knife
Ground shairp in hell—

My conscience!—you that's like a wife!—
Whaur was yoursel'?

I ken it fine: just waitin' here,
To gar the evil waur appear,
To clart the guid, confüse the clear,
Mis-ca' the great,
My conscience! an' to raise a steer
Whan a's ower late.

Sic-like, some tyke grawn auld and blind,
Whan thieves brok' through the gear to p'ind,
Has lain his dozened length an' grinned
At the disaster;
An' the morn's mornin', wud's the wind,
Yokes on his master.

XV.

TO DOCTOR JOHN BROWN.

*(Whan the dear doctor, dear to a',
Was still amang us here below,
I seb my pipes his praise to blaw
Wi' a' my speerit;
But noo, Dear Doctor, he's awa',
An' ne'er can hear it.)*

By Lyne and Tyne, by Thames and Tees,
By a' the various river-Dee's,
In Mars and Manors 'yont the seas
Or here at hame,
Whaure'er there's kindly folk to please,
They ken your name.

They ken your name, they ken your tyke,
They ken the honey from your byke;
But mebbe after a' your fyke,
(The trüth to tell)

It's just your honest Rab they like,
An' no yoursel'.

As at the gowff, some canny play'r
Should tee a common ba' wi' care —
Should flourish and deleever fair
His souple shintie —
An' the ba' rise into the air,
A leevin' lintie:

Sae in the game we writers play,
There comes to some a bonny day,
When a dear ferlie shall repay
Their years o' strife,
An' like your Rab, their things o' clay,
Spreid wings o' life.

Ye scarce deserved it, I'm afraid —
You that had never learned the trade,
But just some idle mornin' strayed
Into the schüle,
An' picked the fiddle up an' played
Like Neil himsel'.

Your e'e was gleg, your fingers dink;
Ye didna fash yoursel' to think,
But wove, as fast as puss can link,
Your denty wab: —

Ye stapped your pen into the ink,
An' there was Rab!

Sinsyne, whaure'er your fortune lay
By dowie den, by canty brae,
Simmer an' winter, nicht an' day,
Rab was aye wi' ye;
An' a' the folk on a' the way
Were blithe to see ye.

O sir, the gods are kind indeed,
An' hauld ye for an honoured heid,
That for a wee bit clarkit screed
Sae weel reward ye,
An' lend — puir Rabbie bein' deid —
His ghaist to guard ye.

For though, whaure'er yoursel' may be,
We've just to turn an' glisk a wee,
An' Rab at heel we're shüre to see
Wi' gladsome caper: —

The bogle of a bogle, he —
A ghaist o' paper!

And as the auld farrand hero sees
In hell a bogle Hercules,
Pit there the lesser deid to please,
While he himsel'
Dwalls wi' the muckle gods at ease
Far raised frae hell:

Sae the true Rabbie far has gane
On kindlier business o' his ain
Wi' aulder frien's; an' his breist-bane
An' stumpie tailie,
He birstles at a new hearth stane
By James and Ailie.

XVI. .

IT 's an owercome sooth for age an' youth
And it brooks wi' nae denial,
That the dearest friends are the auldest friends
And the young are just on trial.

There 's a rival bauld wi' young an' auld
And it 's him that has bereft me;
For the sürest friends are the auldest friends
And the maist o' mine hae left me.

There are kind hearts still, for friends to fill
And fools to take and break them;
But the nearest friends are the auldest friends
And the grave 's the place to seek them.

X

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